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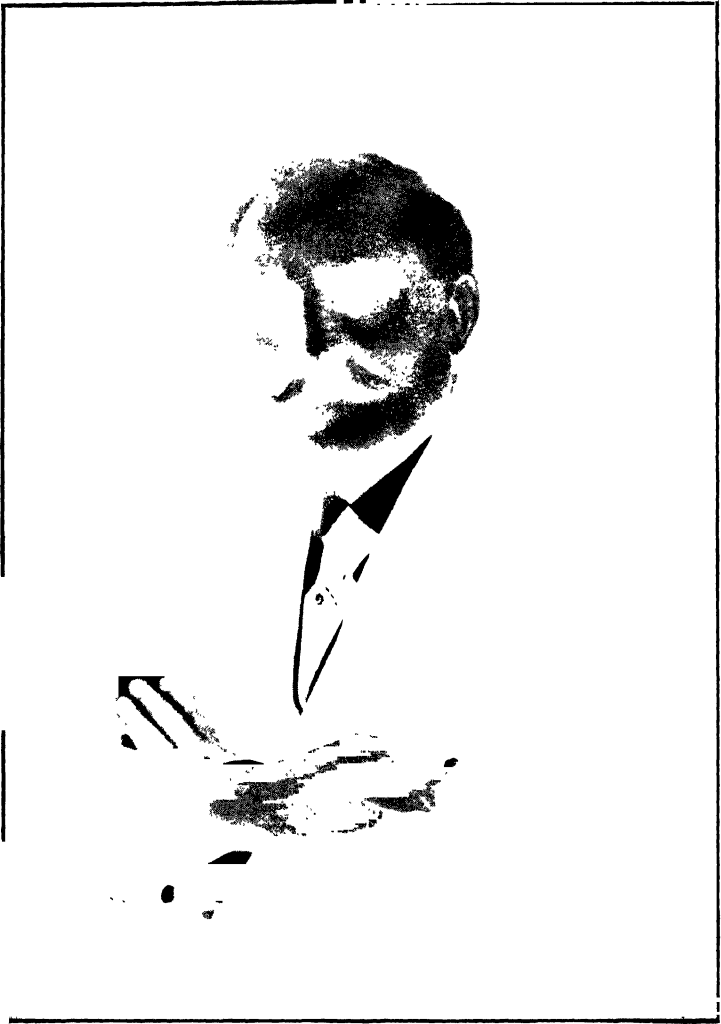


## ROGUES AND OTHERS









EX-CHIEF INSPECTOR ARROW

*[Frontispiece]*

# ROGUES AND OTHERS

By  
CHARLES ARROW

*Ex-Chief Inspector of the C.I.D.*

WITH 10 ILLUSTRATIONS



DUCKWORTH  
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# CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	9
I. A DESTINY-SHAPING ADVENTURE . . . . .	13
II. TRAINING AND INITIATION . . . . .	20
III. I QUALIFY AS A DETECTIVE . . . . .	29
IV. A POLICEMAN'S OUTING . . . . .	37
V. BURGLARIES—"TUBBY" SMITH'S GANG . . . . .	42
VI. A LESSON IN KEY-MAKING . . . . .	52
VII. SOME GAMING-CLUB RAIDS . . . . .	60
VIII. BLACKMAIL . . . . .	70
IX. FRAGMENTS—A CLERICAL IMPOSTOR: A BLOTTING-PAD CLUE . . . . .	84
X. THE BEGGING-LETTER IMPOSTOR . . . . .	92
XI. CAPTAIN REGINALD HERBERT JONES . . . . .	98
XII. THE GREAT BURGLARY AT THE DIAMOND MERCHANTS ALLIANCE . . . . .	105
XIII. A SYNDICATE OF FORGERS . . . . .	114
XIV. DIAMOND JUBILEE MEMORIES . . . . .	120
XV. THE CLERK AND THE CHEQUE-BOOK . . . . .	126
XVI. THE ROBBERY OF THE NELSON RELICS . . . . .	131
XVII. LORD HORATIO WILLIN, ALIAS MISS LILY FAIR . . . . .	137
XVIII. THE YOUNG MAN WITH "PROSPECTS" . . . . .	147
XIX. "MR. SMITH"—A PRINCE OF SWINDLERS . . . . .	153
XX. A TURF SWINDLE . . . . .	162

CHAP.	PAGE
XXI. STEALING OR KLEPTOMANIA . . .	167
XXII. " CAT " BURGLARS . . .	183
XXIII. BARCELONA—" ARROW'S POLICE " . .	193
XXIV. SCOTLAND YARD . . .	210

## ILLUSTRATIONS

EX-CHIEF INSPECTOR ARROW . . .	Frontispiece
FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION . . .	Facing Page 24
P.C. ARROW, 279, B . . . . .	36
SPANISH HANDCUFFS MADE OF COPPER WIRE AND SECURED BY A PADLOCK ; MET. POLICE HAND- CUFFS, NEW STYLE ; MET. POLICE HANDCUFFS, OLD STYLE ; OLD-FASHIONED BULL'S-EYE ; ELECTRIC LAMP NOW IN USE ; POLICE WHISTLE AS NOW USED ; OLD-FASHIONED RATTLE . . . . .	64
ORDINARY SMALL JEMMY ; THE DIAMOND MERCHANTS ALLIANCE CASE ; THE ONLY INSTRUMENT USED IN THE " CAT " BURGLARY . . . . .	112
HON. MRS. YORKE ; NANCY PARSONS . . . . .	182
MOZO DE ESQUADRA ( OFFICER ), MY CHIEF OF STAFF AT BARCELONA ; MOZO DE ESQUADRA, MY DOOR- KEEPER AT BARCELONA . . . . .	192
SCOTLAND YARD FROM AN OLD PRINT . . . . .	210





## PREFACE

SOME years ago a few of my reminiscences as a police detective were published in the London *Evening News*. It has been suggested to me that a more detailed account of some of my experiences with criminals might be of interest, not only to the general public but particularly to a new generation of police, and might serve as a guide to young men of to-day in search of a useful and interesting career, such as I claim the police service to be.

When I commenced to publish reminiscences in a newspaper, some of the many who had passed through my hands as criminals, and had since made good, approached me, fearing that I might injure them by giving them publicity. This I have been very careful not to do. If I have touched upon these at all, they alone will recognise it, for, while I have tried to make these pages interesting and instructive, I have run no risk of injuring anyone. In *The Pelican*, my friend Frank Boyd once said of me, "The most interesting things which he could write about if he chose are those which will not be dealt with in print." This is in a measure true, not only of my experiences while in the London Police, but particularly while with "Arrow's Police" in Spain.

Notwithstanding questions in the House, and a "grossly exaggerated" report of my death which appeared in a Government Blue Book in 1919, by

the grace of God I am still alive, and not "too old" at 60. I was one of the original council of five, afterwards known as "The Big Five," formed at Scotland Yard in 1906. A year later I took my pension to accept an engagement to organise and direct a detective force in Spain. I have never lost touch with or interest in detective work, and two or three years ago I was the happy recipient of a letter from the late Sir Charles Mathews, as Director of Public Prosecutions, thanking me for "extremely useful and wholly admirable work" in a criminal case that had just been dealt with by his department.

It has been said that it should be possible for a man to join the Criminal Investigation Department direct, without having to serve in uniform. I do not agree, especially as there are now so many constables to select from. The discipline, training and experience which he will receive in uniform are a great asset, and a keen man, suitable for detective work, should be able to win his way to selection before he becomes stamped as a policeman. It should be possible, however, for any young man, joining the police with the express purpose of getting into the Criminal Investigation Department, to make this clear in his original application; then, if selected with others not thus earmarked, other qualifications being equal, he should be sure of favourable consideration.

It has been urged that the resources of up-to-date criminals make it necessary that men of superior education and attainments should be induced to join the Department; but how many men with a prospect of distinction in any recognised profession or in

business would sacrifice it for a career as a detective ? The investigation of crime as a profession is not, and is not likely to be, sufficiently remunerative to present sufficient inducement. The attraction to such a career must be so strong that, having to serve as a constable in uniform will prove no impediment, but rather a test of endurance. Given the man who passes this test, it will be found that he will distinguish himself in his career, and will then know how to command and to utilise the assistance of recognised specialists in any profession in dealing with special cases.

Much has been written of late on the employment of women as police detectives, claiming that they possess more sensitive intuition than men. This, I believe, is generally true, and I know that a woman will often succeed in obtaining information by tact and persuasion, especially in dealing with a man, where one of the sterner sex would fail. I doubt, however, if women will take up the work as a career as men do, particularly if they are chosen, as I have recently seen it suggested, "for their youth and good looks," because, naturally, marriage and its consequences will often interfere to break the sequence of their duties. Notwithstanding the inherent difficulties women would have to contend with, I believe it would be a distinct advantage if the detective department of every considerable police force could be supplemented by the appointment of women. They could be employed at the discretion of the chief of the department, the numbers to be in proportion to the number of the men so employed. I see it suggested

that women used to moving in good society should be selected. I doubt, however, if the detective police as a career could be made sufficiently attractive to society women. Perhaps, like specialists, they could be called in to assist in special cases.

In the pages that follow, I have tried to draw a true and uncoloured picture of a few of my experiences as a police officer, avoiding technicalities and personalities. I have in mind the young man at the threshold of a career in search of a profession, and if anything I have written should influence him to follow my example and join the police as a candidate for the Criminal Investigation Department, I shall have my reward. I wish him every success, and to him I dedicate this book.

C. A.

# ROGUES AND OTHERS

## CHAPTER I

### A DESTINY-SHAPING ADVENTURE

I WAS born in a quiet village, which might have been a hundred miles from London, so rural were the surroundings. As a matter of fact, it was just within the Metropolitan Police district.

Leading an active, out-of-door life, I grew up healthy and strong. I attended a school in a neighbouring town about two miles from the village, and it was in my seventeenth year that I met with the adventure that perhaps first turned my thoughts in the direction of the police force as a career, although my parents had intended that I should enter the Civil Service.

The school stood—and still stands, I believe—in the principal street of the town, and just across the road was the tuck-shop, kept by an old woman who took a motherly interest in the boys, and contributed to our well-being with many toothsome delicacies.

On the particular morning on which the adventure occurred there had been a meet of the staghounds near the school, and there were consequently many strangers in the town. It happened that the lady of the sweetstuff shop looked across the road at a moment when two men of suspicious appearance were creeping

stealthily into the school lobby, where she knew we kept our coats, hats and "nosebags."

The men, from the manner of their entry, might have been two of H.M. Inspectors of Schools bent upon paying a surprise visit, but their appearance belied them. They vanished into the corridor, to appear shortly afterwards looking very bulky, and they decamped hurriedly down the High Street. The old lady watched them with some alarm, and then toddled across to the head master to communicate her suspicions. We were sent to the lobby to examine our belongings, and discovered that a dozen overcoats and two of the most richly endowed "nosebags" were missing. We had been robbed!

We became immensely excited when the head master gave us permission to organise a thief hunt. Eagerly we picked up the scent. A small party, including myself, soon came upon the two men on a bridge crossing the local river. We had no difficulty in identifying them, for one dropped half a dozen coats and ran, while the other, undecided whether to sacrifice the "nosebags" or not, was summarily mobbed by the boys, and surrendered unconditionally to overwhelming numbers.

The man who took to his heels was a sturdy fellow, and he got a start which might have saved him had he possessed staying power. He fled down a lane followed enthusiastically by another boy and myself, the elder and more active of the two. I soon found that I gained on the thief, and after a mile or so had him well in hand.

I remember my feeling of elation and excitement as

I outdistanced my companion and gained upon my quarry, a feeling I have experienced many times since. I have often wondered if there is any hunt as exciting as a legitimate man hunt. I remember too, a feeling of caution as I looked over my shoulder to see how far behind my solitary companion was. "What shall I do with the man when I have caught him?" I asked myself.

At this stage the thief left the lane by a gap in the hedge and took to the fields. As he ran he pulled a stout stake from the hedge; this added to my caution, but did not shake my determination to capture him. He made the fatal mistake of crossing a ploughed field, and as I got up to him he fell, so absolutely spent that he could not rise again. I waited just out of range of his hedge-stake until my companion came up almost as exhausted as my victim.

Then we heard the galloping of a horse along the high road. Evidently someone had given notice at the police station of the direction we had taken, for in the distance we saw our friend the mounted policeman coming to our aid at full speed. He must have left in a hurry, for he was in his shirt-sleeves, and with only a bridle on the horse. I have never seen a policeman so unlike a policeman, and the business-like "rough-and-ready" style of the man filled me with an admiration for his cloth which I have never lost.

We jerked the reluctant thief to his feet and the policeman took one arm. I took the other, not because it was necessary, but because I considered I had a proprietary right in the captured man. My companion brought up the rear with the horse.



The High Street is a long street, but it never seemed shorter to me than it did as we moved down its cobbled roadway to the police station, where many of our schoolfellows had gathered to give us a cheer. At the station the two thieves again joined company, and I was then initiated into the processes of charging, searching and measuring, with which I subsequently became so familiar.

At their trial the prisoners saved trouble by pleading guilty and were sentenced to six month's hard labour. The Commissioner of Police, whose attention was called to the prowess of my friend and myself, awarded us the sum of ten shillings each.

This is the adventure which shaped my destiny and led to my becoming a detective. I continued at school for another two years, but my education was really completed by the local police force. The officers made much of me, and many a long walk and talk I had with them on their lonely country beats.

When I was nineteen, I left school to seek a wider field of experience. Very reluctantly my parents consented that I should have my wish and apply to be enrolled as a member of the London Police Force—reluctantly, for they considered that I was wasting a good education by doing so. I was anxious to enter the detective department at once, but found that then, as now, the appointments to this force were made from the uniformed police. Thus it was that I donned the helmet and tunic of a constable, and was sent into the streets of Westminster to carve out a career for myself.

I had first to face a thorough examination by the

chief surgeon. I was passed as physically fit, and handed over to the drill inspector to be chipped into shape. This worthy deserves more than passing notice. I believe he must have been born for his work. He had started as an ordinary constable and had risen to the rank of inspector before I came under his care. When I retired, after twenty-six years' service, he still held the same office, with the rank of superintendent.

He was a man of iron constitution and iron will. By constant exercise across the drill ground his voice had lost all its subtle qualities, but had developed fortissimo tones to a terrifying degree. He had a staccato utterance too, which would shake the steadiest nerves. In his time he must have hammered quite 50,000 polished policemen from raw recruits. The awkward squad shook at the knees before his wrath, but if a man had a grain of anything in him his mentor soon found it out and did his best to encourage and develop it. If, however, a man had no promising qualities, the instructor tactfully enlightened him, and the recruit soon discovered that his health would not stand the strain, or that the work did not suit him, and withdrew to try his fortune in some more congenial employment.

I daresay many people have passed Wellington Barracks in the daytime, and, seeing squads of men drilling in plain clothes, have taken them for army recruits. As a matter of fact these squads of men are potential policemen. Here it was that I went with other newcomers, learned to form fours and companies, march, wheel, and carry out such evolutions as are

necessary to train the police to take up positions and to act together in force.

I passed a month on the drill ground while waiting for a vacancy. It was perhaps the most trying month of my service, but I derived great physical and moral benefit from it. In my turn I was sworn in as a constable, received my clothing and appointments, and was posted to B division, which then embraced Westminster, Pimlico, Belgravia, and part of Chelsea.

When I was fitted with a constable's uniform in July 1881, I was, in police parlance, "of thin build and youthful appearance." The first time I wore my uniform I walked from "The Yard" to my lodgings in Vincent Square in a state of nervous apprehension lest someone should call upon me to apprehend an offender or to step in and regulate the traffic. As I marched from the shelter of the candidates' office into crowded Whitehall I felt much inclined to bolt back and slip out of the uniform. I wore it for nearly three years, and soon lost my feeling of self-consciousness. In fact, I took to it. My buttons and numerals were always bright, and I grew quite proud of my figure, for I wore a tight belt, and a large chest-protector.

During my three years in uniform I performed all kinds of duties by night and day. I took my turn on the roughest beats Westminster could furnish; I regulated traffic in the busiest thoroughfares; I acted with large bodies of police at race-meetings; I formed one of the brigade that cleared the course at the Derby; I helped to keep order at the Lord Mayor's Show and at the opening of the new Law Courts; and I formed

one of the cordon drawn across Whitehall to oppose the advance of a certain politician to the House, who in after-years became a Cabinet Minister. I performed special duties at theatres, the Royal Aquarium, and the Fisheries Exhibition ; I was locked up with the dead for whole nights in Dean's Yard ; I took charge of attempted suicides at the Westminster Hospital ; I recovered bodies from the Thames. These are a few of the things I attended to as a police constable in uniform.

## CHAPTER II

### TRAINING AND INITIATION

SINGLE men in the police force have a great advantage over married men, as they are required to live in section-houses which are really large boarding-houses controlled by the police. The residents are provided with separate cubicles, a reading-room, mess-room, and other conveniences of a club.

I was sent to live in one of these section-houses, and really had a jolly time there. Among my companions were experienced officers, from whom I learned many details of police duty. I found that a high standard of smartness was maintained, both by precept and example, and that summary and forcible lessons, not provided for in police orders, were often administered to offenders against it. There was a place for everything, and everything was expected to be in its place. If your boots were left lying about, the most likely spot to look for them would be the dustbin. If you left your special brand of tea out of your locker, the cry of "cheap tea" went around, and, similarly, if you forgot to lock up your soap, it was "cheap soap," and everyone assumed the right to use it.

A man guilty of objectionable conduct which was not of a nature that could be reported was punished in a way which in the Army would probably be called ragging, but which, at any rate, served the purpose of teaching the offender the error of his ways without

bringing him under the unfavourable notice of his superiors.

We will suppose an offender. A meeting is held in the library to consider his conduct, the man himself and superior officers not being present, and a resolution is passed to "lift" him. Later, at the mess-table, when the offender is one of the party, someone starts a conversation about strength. This leads to argument, and heated discussion as to the relative muscular powers of two of the party, and ends in one of the two making a wager that he will lift a greater weight than any man present. He backs himself, in fact, to lift bodily three men of the company simultaneously. His wager is, of course, immediately accepted, and in order that the excitement shall not subside the company adjourns to the box-room for the wager to be decided.

In this room is a large table, and on it a man chosen by the challenger lies full length on his back. A second man lies beside him, but in a reverse direction, so that the feet of each man rest under the arms of each. Then a suitable third man is chosen, and, strange to say, the choice falls upon the offender, who usually enters into the spirit of the game enthusiastically. He is placed face downwards upon the other two, his head resting on the shoulder of one of his companions and his feet on the shoulders of the other.

Then the signal to "lift" is given, and the arms of the two men below lock the head and feet of the victim as in a vice. His body thus forms a tempting target upon which sticks, belts, and slippers hidden in readiness are showered with a will which bears just

proportion to the sins of the victim. Finally everyone vanishes, leaving the two who have done the holding to convince the third man that they have been as much imposed upon as he.

My first week was spent in attending a police court, to see how my more experienced comrades conducted their cases before the magistrates, and to learn how to give evidence. Then for three or four weeks I was posted to various beats on day duty, in the fatherly care of an old and seasoned constable. After this I was considered capable of taking charge of a beat on my own account, and commenced to be a policeman in earnest.

Westminster at that time was undoubtedly a fine school for young constables who hungered for hard work and blood-rousing experiences. My first beat was in the neighbourhood of Great Peter Street; here I was on duty from ten o'clock at night until six in the morning.

Once, I remember, soon after I had commenced to pace the pavements of my undesirable beat, my sergeant paid me a visit, and remarked casually at parting that he expected to come round later and find me lying in the road in numerous fragments. Perhaps to avert such a misfortune he gave me some serviceable advice. One of the things he said in his fatherly way was: "Look here, my boy, if you are called to a fight, and you are alone, don't go off in a panting hurry to interfere. Most people prefer to see a friendly fight in quarters like this than to see a policeman come and spoil it. Give 'em a chance, and step in when you think they have both had enough of

it. Then perhaps they may even be grateful." Many times have I proved the wisdom of his words.

After the introductory month of night duty I spent an uneventful time on day duty. But in December I was back at night duty again, my beat this time being in a quieter neighbourhood, where there were large houses occupied by wealthy people. I found it very cold, particularly about four o'clock in the morning. I got so drowsy that I frequently went fast asleep walking round my beat.

I was cured of this failing in a rather startling manner. In one street on my beat there were large houses, with short flights of steps leading up to the front doors. Early one morning I must have mounted mechanically to one of these doors, because the next thing I recollect was coming back to consciousness with a jerk and finding myself sprawling in the road, my helmet rolling away on one side of me and my lamp on the other. I had evidently stepped into space from the top of the flight.

I vividly remember my first Christmas night on duty in this neighbourhood. It was miserably wet and cold, and the rain, whitened by snow, was blown into clean-cut sheets by the wind. I tried in vain to feel heroic as I tightened my belt and pulled my cape closer round me. Never had the chimes of Big Ben sounded so solemn and so slow. Just as the bell boomed one, after the four chimes of the hour, leaving a silence so deep that it seemed as if life had stopped, I heard the faint click of a door being opened. I turned, and saw silhouetted against a background of light—not a burglar, but an elegantly dressed young



lady. I was about to pass on, but she called out softly, "Policeman!" and beckoned me. As I hesitatingly took a step towards her she said, "It is a very cold night; let me bring you a glass of hot elderberry wine."

There flashed into my mind the stringent regulations against drinking while on duty, the stern manner in which I knew my inspector enforced them, and the fact that he was liable to turn the corner at any moment, but even as I thought of these things I nodded gratefully. "Thank you very much," I said. She soon reappeared with a tray bearing the steaming elderberry wine and a generous chunk of cake. The wine was too hot to be gulped, so I stood outside the door and sipped it slowly like a connoisseur. Just as I drained the glass I heard a measured footfall.

I looked up and saw my inspector approaching. I realised that I could not possibly have escaped his eye. I must have appeared alarmed and clumsy, for all I could say to my benefactress were the pithy words, "My inspector!" With the cake grasped in my hand, I walked away, trying to drop into the official stride as though there was nothing amiss. To my surprise the inspector neither called nor overtook me, but it was with great misgiving that I tramped round my beat, weighed down by the thought that he would report my offence when I went off duty.

I suppose it was quite half an hour before I reached this house again, and then I saw to my surprise that the door was still open and the lady still there. She beckoned me, and, as I approached her, simply whispered, "The inspector had some too," and shut the



FROM THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

POLICE WHISTLE

HANDCUFFS

SPANISH HANDCUFFS

SPANISH CLASP KNIFE

POLICE BULL'S-EYE LANTERN

AUTOMATIC PISTOL

POLICE COLT REVOLVER

SMALL SMITH-WESSON REVOLVER

SKELETON KEYS

KNUCKLEDUSTER

BURGLARS' TOOLS

„ SMALL JEMMIES

POLICE TRUNCHEON



door. I have never forgotten this lady, for it must have been great kindness of heart that prompted her to await me in the cold to relieve my anxiety. I never discovered who she was.

The duties of a London policeman are numerous and strange. He must be a human directory, a kind of "Enquire within upon Everything." He must have at his fingers' ends a list of antidotes for all kinds of poison, and must know where to find the materials and how to use them in cases of emergency; he must know the address of the nearest turncock in case of fire; he must possess a knowledge of anatomy, particularly that branch dealing with the veins and arteries; he must be able to distinguish between illness and drunkenness; he must have sufficient knowledge of criminal law to know the nice distinction between an offence for which he must arrest and one for which he must not.

While serving my probationary period in uniform to qualify as a detective, I mastered as many of the policeman's duties as possible, and never found in my after-career that I had wasted my time in doing this. There is no better training for a detective than this preparatory period in uniform, the length of which depends entirely upon himself.

I can hardly describe my delight when I found myself selected to perform my first special duty of detection. It was a very simple matter, but to me it was one of those tides "which, taken at the flood, lead on to fortune." I happened to be on duty at the police station, and, having fed the stray dogs which were waiting to be taken to the home, I was in the

act of giving warm milk to one of the numerous stray infants in the charge-room when the chief inspector came through on his way to the office. He stopped abruptly and said in his peremptory way, "What are you doing, young man?" I put down the milk, stood to attention, and saluted. The baby commenced to yell. "I am giving the baby some milk, sir," I replied. He frowned at the noisy infant, and said, still more sternly, "What duty are you on, sir?" I explained that I was on reserve, and he ordered me to parade at the station the following morning at ten o'clock, smartly dressed in plain clothes.

When I duly reported myself, I found that I had a companion in the person of an older and more experienced constable. Together we saw the chief, who explained briefly that complaints had been received of the nuisance caused by street-betting near Victoria Station. He had selected us to keep observation there with a view to arresting the offenders.

As we left the police station I frankly told my companion that I had never made a bet in my life, and should not know a bookmaker from a missionary. He said that was of no importance, but was rather an advantage, as I was not likely to be known by them. He proceeded to instruct me in the art of recognising bookmakers and detecting them at work. He explained that there was no law against betting in the street, but someone had discovered a law which made it an offence for three persons to foregather in the street and cause an obstruction. When a bookmaker was so indiscreet or so unfortunate as to meet two clients at the same moment, or to be accosted by one while

talking to a friend, he could be "brought to book," to use an appropriate phrase, for this offence. This appeared to me very clear and simple; all we had to do was to "spot" our bookmakers and then wait to pounce when the necessary trio formed.

We went to my lodgings for a suit-case, and my colleague explained that his idea was to go to the railway station with me and make it appear that he was seeing me off on a journey. I loaded my bag, and, with my companion, toiled up to the station. We entered the saloon bar of one of the big public-houses close by, and I proceeded to dose myself as if to fortify my spirits against the strain of a long journey. While I was drinking, my companion pointed out two men, one a tall fellow with a large red nose, the other short, and disfigured by a decided squint. These, I was informed, were a couple of bookmakers, who would soon be at their business outside, taking bets from workmen during the dinner-hour.

We went into the railway station, and, after waiting there for about half an hour, called a cab, put my bag inside, and told the driver to take us to Waterloo, but to stop at the bank at the corner of Victoria Street, just outside the station.

My brother officer told me that the two bookmakers usually frequented a pitch opposite the bank, and that from the cab I could watch them unobserved. We drove past their pitch, and there they were, far too busy to think of policemen. Our cab turned round and drew up outside the bank, and, covered by the cab, my companion slipped out and entered.

From the inside of the cab I sat comfortably and watched the two poor "bookies" receive slips and money from groups of betting enthusiasts. When the other officer returned to the cab I told him what I had seen, and, as I concluded, the bookmaker nearest us—he of the large nose—received two clients, and was arrested in the act of taking their bets, so quickly did my companion cross the road.

The prisoner was led off to the police station without the slightest fuss, while I remained in the cab watching the man with the squint. After a few moments' pause he continued his business as though nothing had happened. I soon saw my opportunity, and caught him as neatly as his friend had been caught. "Hallo!" he said, "it's raining blooming policemen to-day. Look here, guv'nor, get it over as soon as you can, because while we are both away, you see, we're losing business."

I will give the court proceedings in detail. They were as follows:

Magistrate's Clerk: "John Smith and William Jones, charged with causing obstruction by betting. Guilty or not guilty?"

Smith: "Guilty."

Jones: "Guilty."

Magistrate: "Five pounds each."

They cheerfully paid, and hurried back to business.

## CHAPTER III

### I QUALIFY AS A DETECTIVE

THE monotony of eight hours of the night spent at a fixed point in a lonely street is sufficient to damp the ardour of the most enthusiastic young policeman, especially when the season is winter and the weather cold and wet. I was posted to such a point outside a small Government office one night in the winter of 1882-3. It was at a time when the dynamiters were busy, and it was my duty to protect the office, which stood at the corner of a quiet street off Bird-cage Walk.

It was a raw night, and I felt very melancholy as I listened to the wind moaning through the leafless trees in the Walk and St. James's Park. I took my coffee-can out of my pocket, deposited it in a corner, and settled myself for the night. I repeated Gray's "Elegy," and snatches of *The Merchant of Venice* that came into my mind, but the time refused to pass more quickly. For the sake of something to do I set to work earlier than usual to make my coffee hot.

You will probably wonder how I could heat the coffee in such circumstances. It was quite a simple matter. I carried the coffee in a can, shaped to fit the pocket, and, in the bottom of it, there was an indentation which would support the can over a street-lamp without extinguishing the flame. All I had to do was to climb a lamp-post, fit the can on the



burner, and wait. I had discovered that it was important to take the cork out, for the first time I used one of the cans I neglected to do this, and the next morning had to report a gas-lamp smashed on my beat.

While the Gas Light and Coke Company prepared my breakfast, I stood at the corner of the passage leading down to Bird-cage Walk, and was surprised to see a figure approaching and to hear the sound of singing, low and sad. As the figure drew nearer I made it out to be a woman, and could hear that her voice was choked with sobs, which she was trying hard to suppress. I stood back in the shadow, and, as she passed me, I saw that it was "Fair Rose," a former acquaintance whom I had befriended. I called her by name, and she looked up and stopped when she saw who addressed her. Abruptly, without any greeting, she spoke to me.

"Two-seven-nine, you have been kind to me, and I would like to do you a good turn," she said. "Would it benefit you if you caught a couple of coiners?"

Knowing what a sacrifice she was making in thus offering to betray some members of the "fraternity," I asked her no questions, but simply said that it would do me good, and agreed to meet her at eleven o'clock that morning in a certain street.

Although I did not get to bed until seven, eleven o'clock found me in plain clothes at the appointed place. Presently, "Fair Rose" came along, and, as she overtook me, she said, without looking up, "Follow the tall woman and the short man who have just turned into Wood Street."

She dropped behind without another word. I hurried on to Wood Street, and there I saw the couple to whom she had referred, walking together. I followed them at a respectable distance along the Embankment to Chelsea, and then into the Pimlico Road, where the woman stopped, as though to fasten her boot. When she rejoined the man I saw her stealthily drop something into his coat-pocket. A few minutes later she turned down a side street, while he continued along the main road until he came to a small tobacconist's shop, which he entered.

When I saw him come out I waited for a moment, and then hurried into the shop and asked to see the coin he had tendered. Shops left in charge of young and inexperienced persons are the happy hunting-grounds of the "snide pitcher." So I was not surprised to find a young girl behind the counter there. She opened a drawer and produced a florin, fortunately the only coin of that value in the till. It was bad, so I gave her directions not to part with it, and ran out to find my man again. He had rejoined the woman at the bottom of the street down which she had turned.

This was a clear case of uttering a counterfeit coin, but one case does not prove a person guilty of a criminal offence, so I followed the pair again. In the King's Road the woman again did up her boot, and again stealthily dropped something into her companion's pocket and left him. For the second time the man chose a small tobacconist's shop, and another bad florin was produced when I enquired as before. I followed the couple to Sloane Square, and as they

passed a constable on duty I seized them and called for his assistance.

The prisoners pretended to be highly indignant, but gave no trouble as we conducted them to Chelsea Police Station, taking care that they disposed of nothing on the way. I searched the man, and found on him two unopened packets of cigarettes, a good two-shilling piece, and change that, with the price of the cigarettes, amounted to four shillings. The woman sat on a bench against the wall awaiting the female searcher. Nothing incriminating was found in her possession, but under the bench she had managed to drop a bad florin, which she probably worked out of her boot with the other foot.

I discovered that the prisoners lived in a miserable garret at the top of a slum tenement. The room was padlocked on the outside, but I opened it with a key I had found on the man. In the room I could see no trace of the coining plant, but two tiny splashes of white metal on the hearthstone showed me that I was on the right scent. The garret window opened on the roof, and, as there were fresh marks on the slates outside, I climbed through the window to investigate. Under a loose tile behind a chimney I found the coining implements, with a plaster-of-Paris mould of a perfect impression of a two-shilling piece.

The male prisoner proved to be an old offender out on licence from an unexpired term of five years. At the Old Bailey he was sentenced to another five years, to which was added the remainder of his previous "stretch." The woman was acquitted by

a merciful jury as being in the position of the man's wife and under his influence.

One afternoon, while I was still on night duty in uniform, I was taking an airing in my off-time in civilian clothes. I happened to hit upon a quiet street in Pimlico where there was a pawnshop, when I saw a rough-looking man approaching carrying a bundle. I stopped him, and asked him what it contained. He answered in the manner of one who had nothing to conceal or to fear that it contained a sealskin coat, and that he had been sent by his mistress, Mrs. Jones, of 16 Linchester Street, to pawn it. Unasked, and as though to relieve any doubt, he produced a note, written as follows :

" 18 Linchester Street.

" Please lend bearer £3 on my sealskin coat.—  
" ELIZA JONES."

Relying on the probability that a servant at " 18 " would not be likely to mistake his number for " 16," I arrested him, and told him I should detain him at the police station until I could verify his statement. He professed great indignation, but walked with me, carrying the bundle, until we got to Charlton Street, near the station. Then he dashed the bundle into the road and made a desperate attempt to escape. He was much stronger and heavier than I, but I succeeded in throwing him on his back, and then fell on him, and there I stayed, with my face close to his, awaiting assistance from the station.

His face was not pleasant at such close quarters,  
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for he literally foamed at the mouth and ground his jaws with rage. A crowd gathered round us, but until a constable in uniform arrived no one ventured to assist me.

Again, as in the case of the coiner, I was fortunate in my capture, for he proved to be another convict on licence, and the coat to be part of the proceeds of a case of housebreaking not yet reported to the police. The whole of the stolen property was recovered, and the thief got seven years. I was extremely fortunate in that my captures, while striving to qualify for the detective department, generally proved to be what I learned to call "good men"—that is, known criminals.

My arrest on a certain Lord Mayor's Day was another instance of this good fortune. I happened to be on special duty at night, and was not required to attend the Show on duty in uniform, but was free to go as a civilian. I used the opportunity to seek business on my own account.

I worked my way up the Strand just before the procession was due, until I came to Wellington Street, on the Waterloo Bridge side of the Strand. Here the crowd was very dense, and I waited. Presently a portly-looking gentleman, with a watch-chain prominent upon his capacious waistcoat, came pushing his way through the crowd. Then I saw a tall man place his right arm over the waistcoat, saw the watch slide out of its pocket into the hand at the end of the arm, and saw the chain swing down minus the watch. I was on the left side of the thief, and so near that I noticed the excited glitter in his eyes—an expression I have never forgotten, and have often seen since on

the faces of criminals at the critical moments of their crimes.

I caught hold of the thief's left arm and shouted to the victim, who was still ignorant of his loss. The watch was no doubt dropped and trampled to pieces, for I could not get at the hand that took it, so hemmed in were we by the dense crowd and so desperately did the thief struggle. The procession was near, and I could not get out with my prisoner, so we were hustled about until a gap in the crowd enabled me to call the attention of the police in the roadway to my position. They made a passage for me into the open road, and through the crowd on the other side towards Bow Street.

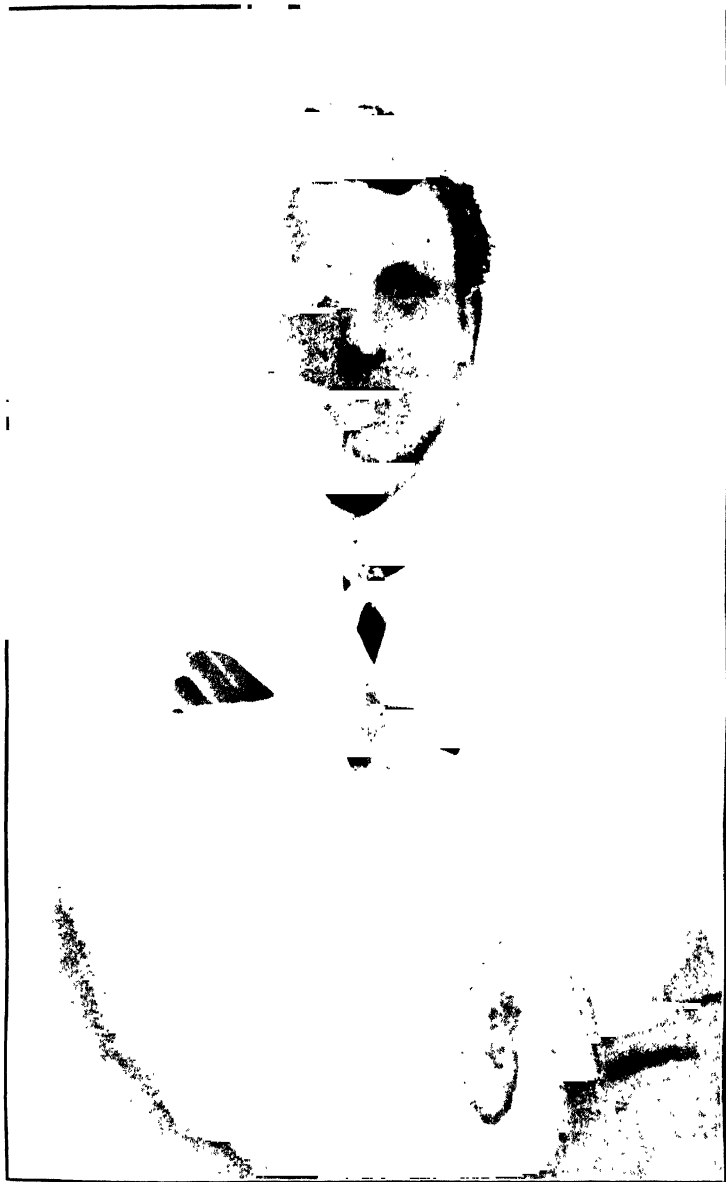
I charged the thief with stealing the gentleman's watch, and searched him, but found nothing. A sage old detective stood looking on. He said, "That's a good man, sonny; give him another rub down." I took his words literally, and passed my hands over the thief from the head downwards. At the back of his trousers I felt several hard lumps, and inside I found a secret pocket containing four watches and a gold sovereign-case with four sovereigns in it. It was evident that the thief had no accomplice, as he not only committed the robberies, but also carried the spoil—an unusual practice, and one severely condemned by criminals as not being a fair division of labour.

I was able to prefer six cases of larceny against my prisoner, and as he, too, proved to be a convict on licence, I considered this a very lucky capture.

The magistrate who committed him was that dear

old gentleman—dead long since—Sir James Ingham. He commended me very warmly, and I received a written commendation from the jury at the sessions, which was strongly endorsed by the judge. The thief received a new sentence of five years' penal servitude, to be followed by three of police supervision. Fifteen years later, when I was the detective-inspector in charge of the most important district in the West End of London, I was instrumental in securing the conviction of this same man for stealing a watch at a Sunday night concert at the Alhambra Theatre. Since our first meeting he had probably been as energetic as a thief as I had been as a police officer. To do him justice, when he saw that he was again found out, he greeted me as an old friend, and I must admit that I felt somewhat grateful to him, for when I most needed it he had afforded me an opportunity that had advanced my interests.

When he was placed in his cell for the night I gave him a handful of tobacco from my pouch, and, as he took off his boots and rolled himself up in his rug on his plank bed, he said, "Well, guv'nor, we've all got to live. If I hadn't been a fief I might have been a policeman!" He did not add, "and vice versa," but I think it was in his mind as he stuffed the handful of tobacco into his mouth and composed himself to sleep.



P.C. ARROW, 279, B





## CHAPTER IV

### A POLICEMAN'S OUTING

THOSE who see the London policeman only in the crowded thoroughfares, or plodding the deserted streets at night, have no idea of the variety of his duties or of the pleasant changes they sometimes entail.

During Ascot week, when the country is at its best in the fresh greenness of early summer, many policemen have an opportunity to escape the bricks and mortar for a week's special duty at the races. Here, for this one week, among the beauties of nature and the fresh pine-scented breezes, all the resources of wealth and art are lavishly employed upon the greatest of social functions in a carnival of sport such as has no equal in the world.

Ascot is the name of a pretty Berkshire village, but, generally, one uses that name as applying to the great annual race-meeting which has been held on the heath for the past two centuries. "Royal Ascot" it is called, and royal it is, for the heath is part of the royal domain of Windsor Castle, and King Edward VII took special interest in it as an institution essentially his own.

I know of no other annual event, lasting only four days, for which such complete provision is made, and yet for 361 days of the year all the enormous buildings on the heath are silent and deserted. The lawns and paddock are under the care of the gardeners, with the result that when the public takes possession of them they are as perfect as those of Windsor Castle itself.

In this four days' racing festival the railway companies, the London Police, and an army of attendants and officials join in providing entertainment for the wealthy, and in regulating the part taken in the festival by the bookmakers, punters, caterers, waiters, gipsies, tipsters, tale-pitchers, sharpers, welshers, thieves, beggars, fortune-tellers and fortune-seekers who flock there to make a harvest, honestly or otherwise, under blue skies and in pleasant, healthy surroundings.

My concern in all these is only in so far as they interest the London Police, who control the course and stands during the meeting. When the stands were reconstructed under the personal supervision of King Edward, in 1902, he caused a substantial brick police station to be built, with extensive quarters for the lodging and entertainment of a large force of police. The buildings include offices, cells, kitchens, sleeping accommodation, and even a police court, which is presided over by the Chief Police Magistrate of London during the meeting.

Each year, some days before the meeting commences, the police quarters are taken over by the London Police, and are cleaned, furnished, and provisioned for a very large body of men. These men arrive on the Monday, the day before the races commence, and they consist of mounted and foot, with their officers, and a number of detectives picked from different districts in London.

Their accommodation is perhaps rough, but they make a jolly crowd, and never grumble. Hard work in the sun and air gives them healthy appetites, and, if they do not sleep long, they sleep soundly. In the early morning they clean accoutrements, take a

cold bath under a tap, and cook a substantial breakfast of bacon and eggs, to an accompaniment of jest and song.

Breakfast and a pipe finished, they parade on the smooth grass in the paddock, and are posted for their day's hot and arduous duty. While on parade, in neat uniforms and polished boots, the green grass of the paddock makes a fine setting to the long lines of stalwart men in blue.

They are posted long before the rush commences ; then everybody appears to arrive at once and to desire to get in position in a hurry. Train after train disgorges, while a still larger crowd arrives in coaches, motor-cars, taxis, and donkey-carts—a struggling, sweating, swearing, beseeching, bewildering mass. Motors here, coaches there, the irrepressible taxi in the way always, and pedestrians everywhere ! One would think the mass could never be sorted from its apparently perilous confusion.

The rush is all over in about half an hour. Nothing happens, no damage is done, and everyone gets comfortably to his position in good time, for all had been arranged with mathematical precision from experience—a policeman here, two there, one mounted at this corner, another in the middle of the road. This stream is directed there, another somewhere else, motors set down and leave by that line, pedestrians walk in safety, and confusion becomes order, for the London policeman is master of the situation. This is only one item of their work for the day, for go where you will in the crowd on Ascot Heath, amongst the cars, round the booths, on the course, by day and by night, you will find the police.

There are also policemen who are not seen. True,

they are few in number compared with the enormous crowds with which they have to deal, and for this reason their influence is largely a moral one—not, however, entirely a moral one, as their numerous arrests will show. They also are carefully distributed where they are most likely to be serviceable. Where the crowd is thickest, they are there; if there is a rush to the paddock, they are in it; a crush at the turnstiles or at the railway station, and they too are being crushed.

The last crowded special has left the station, and the last car has left the course. Already an army of scavengers are at work, clearing up the litter, and the water carts are busy.

Now is the opportunity for the policeman to enjoy a few hours' relaxation. I have vivid memories of pleasant evenings spent on the heath with my companions, and I will ask my readers to accompany us for one occasion.

We wash the dust from our mouths and faces, and sit down to a hearty meal in the mess-room; then, pipe in mouth, we stroll over the heath, join in an impromptu concert in the yard of the police station or play a quiet game of cards.

Let us take a walk. There is a freshness in the air. The nightingales sing as though in rivalry. The quietness of the night is accentuated by their song, and other sounds are heard faintly from long distances. After the bustle of the London streets and the excitement of the day, there is an atmosphere of peace.

A slight breeze blows the sound of music towards us. It is the band of the A division, which played in front of the grand stand during the races, and is now

performing, even though the hour is late, upon the lawn of a mansion where a peer is entertaining a large house-party. We enter the grounds, and listen from the dark shadows of the trees. There is his lordship smoking his huge cigar and chatting to his guests. We watch the brilliant scene as beauty and fashion move about the lawns ; diamonds sparkle in the light which streams from the open windows, the sound of laughter mingles with the music of the band.

We leave the scene reluctantly and stroll on to the course. There, in the booths, some who sleep in them or in the adjacent caravans are still making merry. Around the outside of the booths, under the carts, on the open heath, or under bushes, we dimly discern sleeping forms. What a contrast to the scene we have just left. Have these any compensation ? Well, they sleep soundly at any rate.

Can that be the dawn, so early ? The sun seems scarcely to have disappeared long enough for the earth to cool. Yes, there are streaks of lemon and rose-coloured light right above in the sky, while the darkness below seems blacker. It is the hour that is darkest before dawn.

Listen ! Did you ever hear such a concert ? The day has not broken, but the air is alive with music heralding the sun. It started with one burst, as though directed by some magical conductor. Hundreds of little thrilling throats burst into a song of praise and thanksgiving for the sun, as every lark on the heath soars to the heavens to welcome it. They sing for all alike, but especially for those who had shared their resting-place on the ground, as another day commences for us all.

## CHAPTER V

### BURGLARIES—"TUBBY" SMITH'S GANG

THE captures referred to in Chapter III, particularly the last related, brought me under the favourable notice of the Commissioner, and, when I next applied for appointment I was successful, and was transferred from the uniformed police to permanent detective duty at Scotland Yard.

When I gave up uniform I lost, to a certain extent, the feeling of esprit de corps that it carried with it, for I believe that neither in the Navy nor the Army is this feeling stronger than in the uniformed police. The detective department, I found, was a vastly different organisation, and necessarily so, for unlike the ordinary police force it works secretly behind the scenes, and the public sees, not its workings, but some of the results.

When the young officer gives up his uniform to become a detective he ceases to feel that he is one of the vast uniformed organisation, every member of which will support him, and he feels keenly the loss of the protecting powers of his uniform. Of course his authority is immediately recognised when proof is produced to his uniformed brethren, but it is not always convenient or easy to produce it. If the detective gets into a crowd or into bad company, he often cannot, or does not wish to, declare himself.

My object in going into the force was, as I have

explained, to become a detective, and although I grew to like the uniform and its duties more than I had expected, I was very glad to attain the object of my ambition.

Given a crime and a criminal, you hunt the criminal and forget the crime. You feel the excitement of a sport that has no element of cruelty and a great deal of usefulness in it. There is constant variety. When you have finished with a forgery, you take on a burglary, then, perhaps, a murder, a financial fraud, and so on. As a result of this experience, a detective gains an extensive first-hand knowledge of criminals and their methods, and he is often able, before even commencing his investigations, to compile a list of suspected persons. A modern crook is strangely conservative in his methods. He more often than not specialises in one class of crime, and then deals with it in a style peculiarly his own. It is almost as if there were hard and fast rules governing the manner in which unlawful acts should be committed, and the experienced detective will naturally look for certain signs that may possibly limit the field of his enquiries.

Burglars have an individual style about their work. When a robbery is reported to the police they can usually tell the grade to which the burglar belongs, and sometimes even the particular member of the fraternity concerned is indicated. For example, raids on country houses, or on large jewellers in the City and West End, big safe robberies, coups involving thousands of pounds in money or kind, are the work of a small clique of men who, after weeks spent in careful observation and experiment, set about their business in such a clean and methodical manner that



their detection is usually due to an accident, or to some slight miscarriage of plan which arouses the suspicions of the man on the beat. If they get clear away you do not find they have left clues spread about behind them.

These are cracksmen of the Raffles type, who do not jeopardise their liberty every week or every month. When they get money they lead a gentlemanly existence, giving it a chance during the season's flat racing, or perhaps at Monte Carlo. They dispose of their profits in the same cool, deliberate manner in which they gained them, and do not indulge in rash extravagance. How frequently they tempt fortune is regulated by the same fluctuations which trouble men who do not burgle—the difference between a good season and a bad one. The master cracksmen does not like "cracking cribs" and risking prison, but he does it rather than face work or poverty.

These form the first grade of burglars. They hold themselves aloof from fellow-professionals of a lower order, which makes it most difficult for the police to obtain information against them. In the second rank are daring and intelligent men who have raised themselves above the many who, like themselves, are all habitual criminals, known to the police. There are individual cases in which a burglar of the second rank, after many convictions, becomes disgusted with the irregularity and ill-success of his companions, and separates from them to work secretly and alone. He may give a lot of trouble, but he is invariably caught, and then proves himself a daring and determined man. He is the criminal who uses his revolver or jemmy upon the policeman.

The story I have to tell here is of the capture of four men of the second rank, who had a remarkable career in their profession. I finally brought them to book after they had committed a series of twenty burglaries extending over a period of eighteen months. The sufferers were chiefly fancy stationers, fur dealers, glove sellers, silk merchants, tailors, bootsellers, and umbrella and walking-stick makers. A great number of these shops were in or adjoining Regent Street on the Bond Street side. Though the stolen goods represented a severe loss to the shopkeepers or to the insurance companies, they did not bring very large sums to the thieves. You can't wring high prices out of the receivers.

The remarkable frequency of the crimes here led me to study the formation of the houses, and then I ceased to wonder. Given an empty house in any block, I found it was possible, with the assistance of the dividing walls and County Council fire escapes, to approach almost any other house in the block in Regent Street or the side streets.

"Tubby" Smith, the leader of the gang, had served several terms of penal servitude and shorter terms of hard labour. He occupied the basement of a house off Waterloo Road. The basement, with its area entrance, was convenient, for, as "Tubby" said, he did "a bit of dealing," and could take his old clothing or his bits of second-hand furniture in by this entrance without annoying the other tenants. What he did not point out was that it made it easy for him to slip in and out without exciting the curiosity of others in the house should business keep his nose to the grindstone till a late hour, or call him forth before dawn.

His most energetic assistant was "Nosey" Clarke. He called himself a betting man, but his "old woman" did "a bit of dealing," so he had a convenient shop and parlour on the ground floor, about a stone's throw from Seven Dials. It was in one or other of these places that bulky "swag" was always taken, to be concealed until a buyer arrived.

I examined the scene of burglary after burglary, and found that in nearly all cases entry had been made through the roof, a garret window, a forgotten trap-door, or even through the tiles. In some cases I found traces leading over the roofs from the scene of a burglary to an empty house. It was only by carefully collecting all the evidence in the cases reported to us, and supplying details lacking in one case from what was available in another, that we at last got a description of our four men.

We were able to arrive at the conclusion that entry was always effected by two of the men to an empty house in the daytime or early in the evening, and that they commenced operations as soon as the selected shop had been closed for the night. The third man watched outside, and the fourth man, if the "swag" was likely to be bulky, drove up to the shop with a small covered van, at a time agreed upon. This was either before the police on night duty came on at ten o'clock or immediately after they went off duty at six a.m. The van was driven up boldly, the thieves inside opened the door, and with aprons on and shirt-sleeves rolled up, proceeded to remove the goods in sacks, like workmen paid for the job.

There was a fifth man employed who took no active

part in the burglary. He was a cripple who sold matches in the streets, and he hung about the premises for days before the entry was made, reporting the exact times at which the shop was closed at night and opened in the morning, and ascertaining that no one slept in the building.

Burglary followed burglary, until by working at high pressure night and day, patrolling the streets on foot and on bicycles, watching suspects, empty houses and roofs, we apparently made the neighbourhood of Regent Street too hot for the gang, and they transferred operations to the other side of Oxford Street. I was not responsible for that district, but we continued our efforts, and co-operated with the police of that division.

I lived then at West Kensington, and early one morning, after visiting my patrols, I cycled up to the Serpentine with a towel on my handle-bars, to refresh myself with a swim after a short night at home. Greatly invigorated, I rode through Hyde Park to the Corner, where I pulled up to have a cup of coffee at the stall. As I was drinking it I saw "Tubby" Smith walk across from Constitution Hill and enter the Park. I watched him through the railings take the path for Marble Arch, then I mounted my machine and slowly cycled round by Park Lane to meet him on the other side.

"Tubby" Smith was an example of the perfect burglar. It was never recorded that work had claimed him for even a day. He asserted that he was a dealer because he sometimes found it necessary to describe himself as having some legitimate calling; he dealt in nothing unless it was stolen property. He occasionally

attended race-meetings, when he could pick up a trifle as a tout to some outside bookmaker, but this was more by way of recreation.

I crystallised thus the career of "Tubby" Smith as I cycled along Park Lane, keeping him in view in the distance as he walked quickly across the Park towards Marble Arch, and came to the conclusion that "Tubby" was not out for an early constitutional. I reached Marble Arch in advance and dismounted a little distance down Bayswater Road. "Tubby" stopped outside the Arch and looked round as though expecting to meet someone. Then he sauntered up to a coffee-stall and ordered some refreshment.

To observe him without exposing my face or figure I bent down to mend an imaginary puncture. To my surprise and satisfaction I saw another member of his gang join "Tubby" at the stall—not "Nosey" Clarke, but one of the other two. They evidently did not wish to be taken for acquaintances, for no sign of recognition passed between them.

The policeman on the beat on the other side passed up the Edgware Road from Oxford Street, and "Tubby" went after him up the road on the same side. He was immediately followed by his confederate, who took the other side of Edgware Road. This movement made it clear to me that they were at work, for "Tubby" was making sure that one policeman was out of the way, while his companion was evidently looking after the officer who might be expected to come along in the opposite direction.

A constant stream of shop assistants and workmen flowed down the road towards the West End, and this

enabled me the better to keep the two in sight from a distance as they went up against the stream.

Presently, with his pipe in his hand, "Tubby" turned into a doorway as if to shelter and get a light. This appeared to take him a long time, although there was no wind. He next came into view standing on the edge of the doorstep, dusting his boots with his handkerchief. This was mysterious, as he was not usually particular about his personal appearance. With pipe lit and boots dusted he passed a little farther on, and, crossing the road, turned back and entered a small beerhouse at the corner of a mews. The second man entered, and a moment later "Tubby" came out and mounted an omnibus going towards the Strand. Soon after, I watched the other man out of sight down Oxford Street.

I must admit that I was puzzled as to the significance of the burglars' movements. I walked slowly past the door at which "Tubby" had stopped, but saw nothing. As I retraced my steps, however, I noticed a tiny speck of white sawdust on the ground, and remembered the use of the handkerchief, no doubt to brush such grains away. I could not see where they came from. The door did not lead into a shop, but into a passage. On the ground floor of the building was a boot shop, and each floor above appeared to be separately occupied by business people.

I waited about until the tenants arrived, and the door was opened and hooked back, as it would remain until closed again from the outside at night. Then I stealthily examined it, and inside, near the knob of the spring lock, I found a small, fresh gimlet hole

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and saw that on the outside the opening had been neatly filled with putty of the same colour as the door.

Later in the day I rode past the shop on the top of an omnibus, and saw that nearly opposite the door which "Tubby" had prepared there was a top floor to let. I also saw the crippled matchseller in the street. I at once sent a member of my staff, who was unknown to the gang, with directions to take this top floor and to arrange for its occupation forthwith.

On the fourth night, just as I began to fear that the gang had discovered our operations, "Tubby" Smith was seen to go up to the open door upon which we were keeping watch, pause for a second, and then hurry away. Although none of us could see what had happened, I knew from experience that he had placed a piece of cord round the knob of the spring lock inside and had threaded the end of it through the hole to the outside. One of the gang remained hanging about the street to see that no one discovered the cord, and to give his confederates a signal as soon as the door was closed for the night and the policeman on the beat had passed.

About half-past eight the last person to leave the premises carelessly slammed the door behind him. The policeman passed soon afterwards, and just before nine o'clock "Tubby" Smith and "Nosey" Clarke, who were awaiting the signal in the beerhouse at the corner of the mews, appeared on the scene. They went direct to the door, pulled the cord, walked in, and closed the door behind them.

In imagination I followed their movements inside. I knew that they would cover the glass door of the

boot shop in the passage with a newspaper thickly covered with treacle, and smash it. I allowed them five minutes to do this. Then I reckoned that they would hurriedly make a heap of all the boots they could get at. Another five minutes for this. When the fourth man, with his apron on, appeared with the van, punctually ten minutes after his two companions had effected their entrance, we were ready in the passage of the house opposite.

The outside man who had been on the watch came up, and some sacks were taken from the van. While two of the men filled them with boots in the passage, two carried them outside and placed them in the van.

It is surprising how men like these, who never do a day's work, can move in such circumstances. They bustled about in feverish haste, taking no notice of anyone. There was no stealth about their movements, for their arrangements had been well made, and at this critical moment they knew concealment was useless. At the rate at which they worked they would have cleared the shop in two minutes, but this time their luck was out. There was a sharp, but brief struggle, a crowd assembled, then our prisoners said, "All right, guv'nor, you've got us fair. We'll go quiet."

The proprietor of the shop was sent for, and signed a charge of shopbreaking against the four. They chaffed and swore alternately as they stood in the dock and exchanged conjectures as to who had put them away.

At the Old Bailey they wisely pleaded guilty, and so saved a full revelation of their crimes. For some years after this there were but few cases of shopbreaking in the West End.



## CHAPTER VI

### A LESSON IN KEY-MAKING

WHEN I made the acquaintance of Dr. Williams and his friends, Morgan and Jones, at the Lambeth Police Court in 1889, I was ignorant of their true character, and many of the details that I relate here did not come to my knowledge until much later—too late, in fact, to be of any use against them.

Two of the most popular of the saloon passengers on a liner during a voyage from Queensland to England, in the early summer of 1889, were Dr. Williams and his friend Morgan. They were favourites, not only in the saloon, where the doctor enlivened many an evening with song, accompanied by his friend on the piano, but also in the smoke-room, where their witty stories, general good humour, and freedom with money made them popular with the men. On deck, there were none more willing to oblige the ladies and the young people.

Morgan always called his friend "the doctor," and everyone else followed his example. He was generally supposed to be a doctor of medicine. He apparently avoided the ship's doctor, but if anyone gave the matter a second thought he probably accounted for it by supposing that Dr. Williams was on holiday and wanted to keep clear of "shop." The doctor was popular, too, with the stewards, for although his smart valet, Mr. Jones, in the second class, attended to him in his cabin, he promised well in regard to tips.

The cabin next to that occupied by the doctor and Morgan had for its sole occupant a rich middle-aged lady, whose maid, also in the second saloon, had become quite friendly with Mr. Jones. This lady possessed a quantity of valuable jewellery, which she often wore at night, but at other times kept locked in a jewel-case in her cabin. She carried the key, but while dressing, morning and evening, generally left it in the lock of the jewel-case.

The doctor's bath was prepared each morning at seven o'clock, while the lady took hers half an hour later. The two servants attended their respective charges at these times, and naturally found opportunities to exchange little confidences, even to the extent of flying visits from one cabin to the other when they were satisfied that the coast was clear.

The doctor possessed, among his various toilet requisites, a little box labelled "Somebody's tablets for chapped hands, rough skin, etc." It contained a scented, wax-like tablet, about the circumference of a half-crown piece.

One bright morning, something unusual—land, or a passing ship—attracted attention on deck; and what was more natural than that, directly the lady had left her cabin for the bathroom, and the doctor not having returned from his bath, the valet should call the maid and take her on deck to see what was going on. She was not away two minutes, but during that time the doctor had returned, and had, apparently inadvertently, entered the wrong cabin. He was not there longer than it would have taken him to discover his mistake. He hurried out at once.

It was strange that when he entered the lady's cabin he happened to have in his hand the little box containing his tablet for chapped hands, etc., but no one would have imagined that the "etc." included the use that he made of it then. With lightning-like rapidity he took the key from the lady's jewel-case and made perfect impressions of it, sideways and endways, in his toilet tablet, and as quickly replaced the key.

By this time it will be clear that burglary was one of the accomplishments of this interesting trio. They had no jemmies, centre-pieces, skeleton keys, or such other instruments as are used for nothing else than burglary. They were far too smart. If by any chance their instruments had been seen, even by a detective, they would probably have attracted no suspicion. They looked quite innocent. The outfit included just one or two small steel probes, a delicate bright steel hand-vice, and a few keys of various sizes, such as might have belonged to the doctor's instrument cases at home.

Anyone able to see into the doctor's cabin that afternoon might have had a practical lesson in key-making. There he sat, his vice fastened with a thumb-screw to the frame of the washing-stand, his toilet tablet by his side, fashioning a key into the exact duplicate of the one the impression of which he had taken. You may think, "Why take all this trouble, when he could have stolen the jewellery instead of taking the impression of the key?" It was to avoid unnecessary risk or suspicion. The jewellery might have been missed immediately, and this would have been awkward for our three friends.

The next morning there were sports on deck, including a tug-of-war, in which all the saloon passengers were interested. It was the custom of the valet to attend to his master's cabin after breakfast, and then, by courtesy of the stewards, to take his own bath in the first-class bathroom used by his master. The maid was also in and out of her mistress's cabin after breakfast, and always went on deck to make the lady comfortable there for the morning.

On this particular morning, while the maid was thus occupied, the valet slipped in at the open door of the cabin, unlocked the jewel-case with the false key, abstracted the jewellery, and relocked the case. Then, in his master's cabin, with the vice, the tweezers, and the probes, he adroitly removed every stone from its setting, and dropped the tools and the settings through the open porthole into the sea. All that remained of the jewellery was the little heap of valuable stones. The only consideration now was how best to dispose of them.

There was not a single move in this robbery that had not been carefully thought out beforehand—nothing was left to chance—and their plan for concealing the plunder was, I think, quite original.

Mr. Jones took an old kid glove and cut off the fingers as though for finger-stalls. He placed an equal quantity of stones in each of the fingers, then tied the ends with a piece of string—fingers at each end of the string. He put them in his pocket and went to take his usual morning bath. In the bathroom he did a peculiar thing. There was some mahogany panelling there which covered the pipes connected

- 201 -

with the bath. He unscrewed one of these panels with the small screw-driver that formed part of his knife, hung the fingers containing the stones by the string that connected them round one of the pipes inside the panel, and neatly replaced it. When the lady dressed for dinner at night she discovered her loss, and no one was more prompt in insisting upon a general search than the doctor and his friend.

The visit of Dr. Williams and his companions to the old country commenced under rosy circumstances. The jewel haul more than paid the expenses of the journey from Australia. They did not arrive in London quite as strangers. They were pretty well known in a certain set that changed its headquarters from Sydney to Adelaide or from Melbourne to Freemantle, according to the activity of the police, and a gentleman very popular in this set in years gone by welcomed the visitors with open arms when he read their letters of introduction. He did his best to make them feel at home by introducing them to a few of the "best," to a safe market for their produce, and to a clever "mouthpiece," in case of accidents.

As I have shown, the accomplishments of our three friends were varied, and the trio formed an effective combination. The doctor specialised in the gentle art of stealing from hotels. His taste did not run towards money, unless in bulk; he was a connoisseur in the matter of jewels and securities. As Morgan had proved himself lucky and skilful in jewellers' shops, he led the gang when opportunity offered in this direction. Jones, who had now dropped the

rôle of valet and joined his companions on terms of equality, was a masterly pickpocket.

It chanced that soon after the arrival of these three adventurers a popular fête was held at the Crystal Palace. They decided to be present—on business. There was a special display of fireworks at the Palace that night, and this and the festival which preceded it attracted an audience more fashionable than usual. The professional eye of Jones kindled as it gazed upon the gathering. It appeared to him that never before had he had such an opportunity to prove his skill. An unfortunate Colonial, how was he to know that fireworks crowds were not virgin ground for the thief? Besides, he was quite ready to back himself against any of the local light-fingered gentlemen. He determined to get to work without delay, and told his companions so.

When on active duty, Jones usually chose the left-hand trousers pocket. His method of treatment was simple and effective. As their first victim, the trio selected a middle-aged gentleman of prosperous appearance, accompanied by two ladies, with whom he chatted light-heartedly with an American accent. The doctor worked himself into position half in front of the victim, so that the latter could see the fireworks over his right shoulder without inconvenience. Morgan took up a position on the right side, while Jones stood close behind, and exactly parallel with the doctor, so that these two formed a mortise into which the affable American just fitted, kept in position by Morgan.

Jones now slid his right hand down the doctor's right side until he felt the desired pocket. Still

keeping his hand pressed against the doctor, so that the victim should feel no movement, he passed his delicate hand into the pocket and abstracted a purse which he found there. He dropped back among the crowd behind, the doctor and Morgan keeping their position for a few minutes to ensure his escape. Then they moved discreetly away, and all met again by previous arrangement in the restaurant on the terrace. There they found a table, and while awaiting attention examined their prize. By its legal owner it was called a "pouch," and it contained four £20 notes, one £5 note, a fair amount of gold and silver, and some cards and memoranda of no importance to the trio.

Jones put the money in his pocket, and dropped the purse and papers under the table near the wall. This was rash, for when the waiter found the purse later, containing the memoranda and cards bearing the owner's name, and showing him to be an American, he associated it with these three men, whose accent appeared to him to be American. His attention had been particularly called to them, because they ordered a bottle of the very best vintage and rewarded him with an unduly large tip.

The three thieves, elated by wine and success, determined not to tempt fortune further on this occasion and made their way to the railway station. Unfortunately Jones could not resist another trial of his skill, and at the last moment, as the train came in, he was seized by a man who complained that the Australian had his hand in the wrong pocket. Notwithstanding his own protests and those of his friends, he was marched away to the police station.

The prisoner appeared at the Lambeth Police Court the next day, and although his two fellow-criminals had the audacity to give evidence that they knew him to be a man of good character and position in Australia, he was remanded in custody on the evidence of the man who had been his intended victim. The machinery of the English law works swiftly, and when our two indignant witnesses appeared at the police court again they found their promising career in England cut short. They were put in the dock with their companion and included in the charge of attempting one theft and carrying out another—that of which the American was the victim.

Morgan and Jones were restored to liberty after a long term of imprisonment, and sought a new sphere of labour in America ; they were ashamed to face their former associates in Australia. The doctor, who was the oldest criminal and had a longer term than the other two, continued an unsuccessful criminal career in England after his release, until he lost his nerve. Now you may see his tall, bent figure and scarred face sometimes in the Strand, sometimes near the Bank of Australasia, or the Bank of New South Wales. He gains a precarious living by “tale-pitching” or, as some call it, “telling the tale.”



## CHAPTER VII

### SOME GAMING-CLUB RAIDS

WHEN I was first placed in charge of the investigation of crime in a West End district, gaming-clubs were much more common than they are to-day. Most of them were run by foreigners, and were a source of large profit to their proprietors. The gaming carried on was invariably that of faro or baccarat, in which the holder of the bank has an advantage over the punter. Needless to say, someone interested in the management was usually the banker.

These clubs paid no excise duties, and as their consumption of bad spirits, beer and cigars was very great, huge profits were cleared in this department alone. It may therefore be imagined that when such a concern was once started on a large scale its proprietors were not at all particular as to the means they resorted to to keep it running.

They were able and willing to pay considerable sums for their security—to ensure them against surprise by the police, or the introduction into the club of a secret police agent. In fact, they established a kind of secret vigilance committee to watch the police and obtain information. It was therefore very difficult to take successful action. Process could not be obtained against them irregularly, but only in the manner provided for by law. Therein lay their safety. It was not sufficient for the police to know that a certain club existed for illegal gaming ; it was

necessary for them to be in a position to produce proof of it.

Gaming is not a crime, and that the detection and prosecution of gaming-clubs was part of the work of the C.I.D. has sometimes been commented upon. But the primary object of this department is acknowledged to be the prevention of crime, and it is certain that the suppression of these dens of gaming and drunkenness was an important step in this direction.

I believe it was once publicly stated that Tottenham Court Road was "the most wicked road in London," a statement that very properly caused great indignation among the many who felt themselves concerned in the indictment, though they were suffering from the depreciation of property there, caused by the establishment round them of a colony of undesirables. It was in the very centre of this colony that the Roma Club flourished. It had flourished so long and so strongly that its existence was not only a menace to the neighbourhood, but also a reproach to the authorities.

It was on this account that, on taking charge of this district, I felt it was my special duty to stamp out the club. I saw that my task was a hard one. I worked at my schemes for weeks and made no progress. It was a set-back to find that all attempts to get an agent into the club were unsuccessful. At last, however, by a lucky chance, I succeeded in finding a suitable man. He was an intelligent foreigner, unknown in the neighbourhood, and willing to risk an attempt to penetrate into the Roma Club.

I instructed him carefully in his part, supplied him liberally with money, and after he had spent a night

or two in public-houses frequented by habitués of the club, he succeeded in getting himself invited inside, as a desirable victim. He furnished me with reports of the gaming that went on until the early hours, the names of the bankers and others who occupied responsible positions, and a plan of the premises. Fortified with this information, I was able to obtain the necessary process to raid the club.

I have, during a rather eventful life, enjoyed many forms of excitement, but I know of nothing to compare with the excitement of organising and carrying out a raid on a gaming-club in the small hours of the morning in a hostile neighbourhood. The stratagems to secure the necessary evidence, and the manœuvres to gain or force an entrance and prevent the escape of the gamesters had always a fascination for me.

One morning at one o'clock, without previous notice, I assembled six or seven trusted men in my office and gave them their instructions, assigning to each man a special duty, with strict injunctions to attend to that alone. Two of them—sturdy, determined fellows—left the office first in order stealthily to approach the door of the club, and by some artifice to gain possession of it, open. I followed them at a distance of two hundred yards, with one companion. The same distance behind us came another pair of plain-clothes men, whose duty it was to follow me into the club and mount guard over the room where the gaming was carried on.

A crowd of uniformed constables, due off duty at one o'clock, was kept at two neighbouring stations to lend a hand if necessary. I had a runner concealed

near the club, and directly the entry was made he was to dash off to the nearest station for assistance. Information would then reach the other station by private wire, and the reserves would come out.

The first two men turned the corner of the street, where the club was situated only about a hundred yards down. I followed quietly to the corner with my companion, expecting to have to wait, and peered cautiously toward the club. To my astonishment, there were the two men struggling with some others in a heap on the step, and the door wide open.

We dashed down the street and into the club without stopping to solve the mystery. I led the way up a flight of stairs, brushed away the man who stood in front of a door leading into a back room, and entered. We found ourselves in a large, well-lighted apartment, bare of ordinary furniture. At the end farthest from the door, were three large, green baize-covered tables placed end to end. The banker sat at the other side of the tables with his back against the wall, and a croupier on either side.

The banker was dealing a faro pack, with a pile of gold and silver at his side. The "beds" were marked by four matches, easy to remove in case of surprise, and gold and silver were staked at their eight ends. The players all had their backs to us, and fortunately the scrimmage downstairs had not alarmed them. They were so intent upon their game that I really believe that if I had placed a stake on the cloth it would have been taken and covered at that moment without any comment.

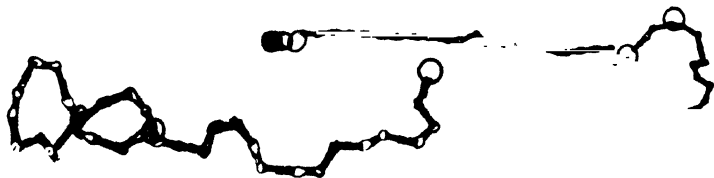
Before my presence had been realised, I fell like a

sack of flour over the punters' shoulders on to the gaming-table, and as I covered money, cards and matches, their surprise was so great that the first thing their startled intellects grasped was that I had a stalwart companion with a ready police truncheon in his hand for my protection. They immediately recognised the authority of the law as I said, "Gentlemen, you are my prisoners." Although there were over eighty men in the club, they offered no resistance.

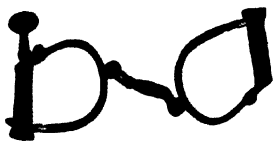
Had they known our real position matters might have been different ; at the moment, and for some five or ten minutes afterwards, we were absolutely alone in this crowd. I discovered later that when my advance guard arrived near the door of the club, prepared to wait for it to be opened to admit a frequenter and surprise the doorkeepers, they found it open and a row in progress on the doorstep. They immediately seized the door, and it was while the struggle for its possession was going on that I slipped in with my companion. Then the door was slammed behind us, and fastened with a spring lock, leaving my other detectives outside. Fortunately, our weakness was not discovered until the club was surrounded by the reserve uniformed police, who entered by means of a ladder over the first floor balcony in front.

"Pantehnicon vans, like the weather, are full of surprises." This might advisedly pass as a warning and a proverb among certain shady folk in London. A number of them have been able to testify as to its truthfulness.

The first pantehnicon-van raid which took place was, I think, one organised by me in connection with



SPANISH HANDCUFFS MADE OF COPPER WIRE  
AND SECURED BY A PADLOCK



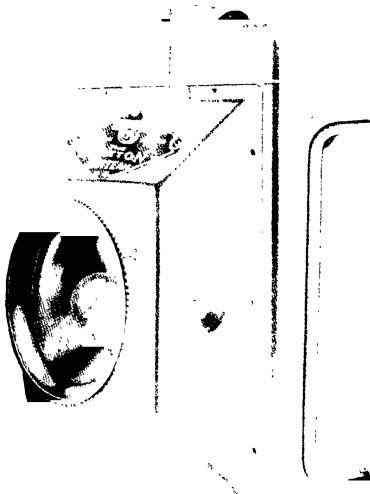
METROPOLITAN POLICE HANDCUFF,  
OLD STYLE



METROPOLITAN POLICE  
HANDCUFF, NEW STYLE



OLD FASHIONED BULL'S-EYE



OLD FASHIONED RATTLE

ELECTRIC LAMP, NOW IN USE



POLICE WHISTLE AS NOW USED



a notorious daylight gaming-club. "Club" in this and similar cases was, as I have already pointed out, merely a polite euphemism for public-house. Their influence, however, was far more harmful.

After newspaper accounts of raids on these places, we used to receive many anonymous letters from women thanking us on behalf of starving wives and families for closing them, or denouncing others still open, as the ruin of a husband and a home, and begging that action might be taken against these.

The frequenters were of two classes—those who lived by card-gambling at night and by betting in the day, and those who got just sufficient drink at public-houses to make them feel a desire to "make a night of it," with more drink and the unusual excitement of staking and winning or losing money. It was the men of this latter class who kept the gaming-dens going. They were led to the dens by a regular service of touts, who attended legitimate places of entertainment in search of victims.

About this time the police had been as active in closing night-clubs as in clearing the West End of street bookmakers. Therefore those who lived by these night-clubs suddenly found their source of supply cut off. They were face to face with a crisis; they could not make a book in the streets by day, and if they opened a club at night it was promptly raided by the police. They felt that this was a bitter waste, for there were round Charing Cross Road and Shaftesbury Avenue thousands of workmen, clerks, waiters, cabmen and others who were always keen to have a shilling on a horse.



The smart crooks decided on a scheme for supplying this demand. One of them applied for the tenancy of a vacant shop in the neighbourhood. A confederate furnished him with a reference, describing him as "a diamond merchant in a large way of business, and a most desirable tenant," and he signed an agreement to pay £300 a year rent for a term of seven years, and took immediate possession. Of course the new tenant agreed to use the premises only for the purposes of his business as a diamond merchant, and bowed to other restrictions. He was not at all particular what he signed ; he never intended to pay rent, as he counted on being arrested in three months.

He did not go to any great expense in fitting up his shop. A few chairs, a cheap counter for the refreshment department—bought second-hand and not paid for—and one or two rickety tables, were all that he got in before throwing open the doors to the hundreds of prospective customers in the streets outside. A large betting-book was opened, and in order to induce the men who flocked there in their dinner interval to remain later than their usual hour, a faro bank was kept running between one o'clock and three in the afternoon.

No doubt this faro bank was very profitable, although I could not ascertain the exact takings. I can speak positively, however, with regard to the betting-book. The club was open for fourteen days, and during that time the book showed a profit of £1,150. No wonder the few who divided the takings could afford to take extreme measures to keep the police out. They had touts posted at all neighbouring street corners, who knew every member of my staff by

sight, and were thus able to guard the club from a surprise attack. This is where the pantechnicon van came in.

Early one afternoon a pantechnicon of unblemished appearance was backed into the police-station yard. The doors were closed to shut out any chance observer, and the van was loaded, not with furniture, but with twenty policemen, including half a dozen detectives. One stout, bucolic-looking detective made his usually clean face dirty, put on an old cap, an old pair of boots, a frayed greatcoat over a green baize apron, and a soiled muffler, and mounted the tailboard of the van. Another man, similarly disguised but more nimble, rode on the box seat to direct the driver.

We kept in the stream of traffic along Oxford Street and Charing Cross Road until we came opposite the door of our club. Then, according to arrangement, something went wrong with the harness, and the two disguised detectives got down to attend to it, their eyes glued the while upon the club door. A minute later the door was cautiously opened to admit a customer, the two officers rushed to secure it, and at the same instant the doors of the pantechnicon van burst like a dam forced by an irresistible flood, and out shot the twenty policemen.

The two detectives, whose duty it was to surprise the doorkeepers, had been a little too precipitate. We found the door open, but on the chain. Still, this delayed us no more than a moment or two, for we smashed in the glass panel, pulled the door to, and unfastened the chain without hindrance.

This entrance led straight into the club-room, and we

found ourselves spectators of a scene of feverish excitement. About a hundred men were fighting and scrambling round a window at the far end of the room. As quickly as the press would allow, they jumped, fell, or dropped from the casement in all imaginable positions, risking broken limbs, bruises and torn clothes. Before we could succeed in clearing the crowd from the window, about thirty men had escaped into the basement below, and what followed was so ludicrous as to restore everyone to good humour, save those who thought they had succeeded in getting clear away.

As I have said, the club-room was built as a large shop or warehouse. It consisted of a ground floor and basement, while over it were residential flats entered by a separate door. The only way into the basement was down a staircase from the inside of the shop. You will now realise the predicament of the escaped prisoners. When they were conducted up this staircase into the club-room again, rubbing their elbows and their heads, they were greeted with jeers and shouts of laughter by those who a few minutes before had envied them their escape.

We made a thorough examination of the room. Cards were found littered round a table which, when collected, formed complete faro packs of thirty-two cards each ; the betting book was seized, money was found lying about, and on a wall was a notice :

“ FIFTEEN PER CENT. CHARGED ON TOD SLOAN’S  
MOUNTS.”

This jockey was then at the zenith of his fame.

The prisoners were all taken to the nearest police station in batches of twenty-five, inside the pantechnicon van. A large and interested crowd gathered outside the club, and as the crestfallen captives entered the van they were greeted with good-humoured banter and cheers. The traffic was held up for us at Piccadilly Circus, and there were many speculations as to the character of the moving job which the police had taken in hand.

## CHAPTER VIII

### BLACKMAIL

I HAVE been credited with knowing a good deal about blackmail, and in a Government Blue Book, a few years ago, it is shown that a Permanent Under-Secretary for Home Affairs, in giving evidence before a Select Committee on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, referring to blackmail, said " Superintendent Arrow, who investigated a great many cases, is now dead." While I admit that the first allegation is true, I plead not guilty to the second.

An eminent judge has recently referred to blackmail as " moral murder," and I know of no phrase that so aptly describes it, for, unlike the murderer who disposes of his victim once and for all, the blackmailer returns to his prey time after time, and always with fresh extortions. Once in his clutches, the victim is never safe ; one payment succeeds another, and still the threats continue. This is what constitutes the " moral murder," for, in course of time, the victim is crushed within the toils until he loses even the will to escape, or does so by self-destruction as the only way out.

I want to write very plainly about blackmail: Essentially a crime " in secret," it is far more common than many people imagine. Few of those attacked have sufficient courage to face the publicity of the open court, and, where one person will do this, perhaps ten others will pay in order to avoid what they think

will mean exposure. Thus the blackmailer works in secret and reaps his reward in secret. It is a crime that presents little element of risk to the criminal for, while it is natural to protect one's property from a thief by active defence, it cannot be said that blackmailers run much risk when they steal the money and the peace of mind of their victims. Thus the crime attracts a class which lacks sufficient courage to pursue what I might call the open method of crime. The blackmailer is usually the kind of person who will not put up a fight when cornered. And in this fact lies not only the greatest hope for the victim, but also the most suitable weapon of defence.

I have often been asked how best to deal with this crime. The answer to the question is so clear that I have never ceased to wonder why there should be any doubt about it. The obvious thing is, of course, to face the blackmailer from the start with an uncompromising refusal and a threat of prosecution. I know that this advice is easier given than followed, but the hard, unpleasant fact remains that only in a firm stand from the very beginning is there any hope of being able to resist attack successfully. A single payment in the hope of buying silence is fatal ; it will always be followed up by further demands. Do not part with a penny. If you feel yourself in danger, go to a solicitor of repute, and keep nothing back from him, or go to the police for protection. The courts always give the fullest protection to the prosecutor in cases of blackmail, and there is never any undue publicity. Indeed, every encouragement is made to bring the matter into court, and, where the case is

proved, the prosecutor will usually receive commendation from the judge for his action in coming forward.

It has been said that the best protection against blackmail is not to have anything in your life which you would be ashamed to make public, but even a person with a blameless past is not immune from the possibilities of blackmail. There are many actions, innocent in form and intention, which can be so twisted by a cunning criminal that it becomes a matter of great difficulty, sometimes even of impossibility, to explain away suspicions which the craft of the blackmailer throws upon them. The *modus operandi* is always the same : a hint, a threat, a demand, and then, if a payment is made—to quote another famous judge—“ the result is to inflict slow death upon the victim, and the object is to extract from sheer terror as much as, or more money than, he can afford.”

Sir George Lewis, Bart., the famous lawyer, writing on the subject in the *Daily Mail* a short time ago, said :

There are individual blackmailers and gangs of blackmailers ; the latter are often known to the police, but they cannot prosecute because they cannot get the person blackmailed to come forward. So long as the world goes on there will be blackmail ; there will be the circumstances which cause it ; and there will be the fear of persons to prosecute the persecutors.

Considering the extent to which blackmail is continually being carried on, it is extraordinary how very

few prosecutions are recorded. Most of these, too, will be found to have originated, not on the complaint of the victims, but through having come under the notice of the police by some accident, some side-line, or by the astuteness of the police in dealing with suspected persons and so finding the crime and the victim through the criminal. The prevalence of the crime, and the fact that it so rarely gets the punishment it deserves, is not the fault of the police, but is largely due to the failure of the public to avail themselves of the protection of the law.

As Sir George Lewis points out, there are individual blackmailers and also gangs of blackmailers. The individual is frequently a woman, and her victim a man. Mostly, it is the sex attraction which provides the opportunity. A casual acquaintance is made at a restaurant, a dance, at an hotel, in the street—in fact, anywhere where the woman can exercise her powers of attraction. Later on she will draw a letter from him on some specious pretext, or arrange a meeting in circumstances so engineered as to give colouring to an accusation that may be entirely false. Should the man be weak, his fall is much more easy, and proportionately more remunerative. The woman will use every artifice to gain her ends. She will claim to be faced with the full penalty of her indiscretion; disgrace and ruin are anticipated; loss of employment and the means of living; anything, in fact, which will impose upon the victim. As time goes on she may even raise the suggestion of an illegal operation, and make it appear that her victim either prompted this or was a party to it. Sometimes an



outraged husband will turn up with threats of divorce and exposure. No damages will compensate him for the ruin of his domestic life; he has left his wife, and she has to be provided for. Finally, however, he consents to accept a sum of money to settle on her, and, when he gets this, the couple have a good time until it becomes necessary to find another victim.

The worst form of blackmail is, perhaps, that carried on by gangs. This is the true malignant growth, the "cancer of society," as Mr. Justice McCardie described it. Usually women have no part in these attempts, for the occasion is made to appear to be due to something unnatural, to which a man, often quite innocently, is said to have been or to have intended to be a party to. Protection from gangs of this nature is very difficult, but again the intended victim should refuse to be blackmailed. He should seek the assistance of the police or of a solicitor at the earliest opportunity, and should not be intimidated from this course by threats of becoming involved in an unsavoury prosecution. The courts are severe in their punishment of such gangs, and when once it is seen that their victim has placed himself under police protection the blackmailers will usually be only too ready to keep out of his way for fear of possible complications. The Lord Chief Justice administered a very straight warning recently, in sentencing two men to twelve years' penal servitude each, when he said, "Blackmail is on the same footing as assassination," and added that judges had declared their determination to exterminate the evil.

These gangs generally consist of two or three men

and a youth—invariably a youth, or a young man made up to appear youthful. This is the decoy. They frequent quiet streets and squares in the neighbourhood of the West End clubs, hotels, and restaurants, particularly the streets and squares off Piccadilly and Pall Mall. Here the youth operates under the observation of one or two of the men, who endeavour to look like policemen in plain clothes. One of the men, on occasion, will represent himself to be the father or elder brother of the youth, or even a solicitor representing his family.

Any gentleman strolling home at night or in the early morning from his club or from some function or even from the House, is looked upon as a possible victim and may be followed by the youth under the observation of his accomplices. The youth will ask the gentleman for a light, or beg from him—anything to get into a conversation; and, if he can gain sympathy by a tale of woe sufficiently to induce the gentleman to ask him into his house or chambers, for food or other assistance, this is a consummation devoutly to be wished, and the rest is easy, especially if the youth manages, as he often does, to steal some article from the gentleman's rooms as a proof of his having been in them.

Then the outraged "father," the "elder brother," or the "family solicitor" appears on the scene and endeavours to show good cause why the youth should be sent out of the country to give him a chance overseas, also that the gentleman is sufficiently interested to assist with money to this end. To prevent scandal, and in the hope of putting an end to what may appear

to him no more than a serious nuisance, he finds the passage money, only to realise that by doing so he has placed a weapon in the hands of scoundrels who know no mercy, and whose demands are only limited by the victim's power to pay.

The following reminiscence may be of interest as illustrating the difficulty the police have in getting persons to prosecute in blackmailing cases; also as an instance in which, instead of the victim initiating the proceedings, as in most other crimes, the police find the crime and the victim through the criminal. It will show, too, that in the absence of bigger game, no man who looks as though he can raise £10 is safe from these gangs of blackmailers.

“ I commend you immensely for doing this. If other people would only be as bold and plucky as you have been, it would put an end to a great deal of mischief and wickedness.”

This was a commendation addressed to the prosecutor by the late Sir Robert Newton when, as magistrate at the Marlborough Street Police Court, he committed three men for trial on a charge of blackmail. Praise from “Bobby Newton,” as he was affectionately called, was rare indeed, and only given in appreciation of conduct quite out of the ordinary. Sir Robert Newton, even at that time, was one of the old school of gentlemen, a fine old aristocrat, courteous and kindly, yet an autocrat in upholding the dignity of the bench. He was a terror to criminals, and even on occasions to police witnesses and members of the

Bar. He knew his West End thoroughly, by day and by night, and could thus appreciate the service he commended.

When the various incidents took place that led up to this prosecution, I was responsible locally for the prevention and detection of crime in a West End division that took in Oxford Market, Marylebone Lane, and similar places near Oxford Street. In these quiet places, just off the main thoroughfare there were at that time conveniences for men, which happily do not exist in the same form now. Their situation and their quietness afforded opportunities to blackmailers whose activities soon came under my notice, but in an indirect manner.

Several anonymous letters were sent to me from headquarters with instructions to investigate. It may be well for private persons generally to take no notice of anonymous letters, but the police cannot afford to do this, and I have known many instances in which they have contained valuable information, as in fact, proved to be the case in regard to these. They were all similar in character, and contained charges of blackmail against three men, but gave no clue to the victims and no information by which the criminals could be identified, except a very general description of them and some particulars of the places where they had picked up their victims, which, in every instance, enabled me to locate one or other of those conveniences referred to in my last paragraph.

I realised that to identify these men at all was a difficult proposition, and that, if identified, it was practically impossible to arrest them on such a serious

charge as blackmail without a prosecutor. I might have arrested them as suspects, and, perhaps with difficulty, have got them three months each, but I decided to endeavour to solve the problem and to achieve the practically impossible, for I felt personally interested to put a stop effectively to crimes that were being committed with impunity in a district for which I was responsible, and this was how I set about it.

I went into the matter thoroughly with two of my assistants, and, from the somewhat meagre and varied description I had of the parties, we endeavoured to visualise them and their methods of procedure, and then I instructed the two assistants to keep observation in the neighbourhood of one or other of the conveniences from dusk until the public-houses closed, as often as their other duties would permit, and I arranged to join them whenever possible. After many nights of patient watching we were able to pick up first one man and then another, until we had three somewhat answering to the descriptions given us. We saw these three first in one place and then in another, no doubt in touch by sight or sound, but very careful not to be seen together while on the watch for possible victims.

While I was watching in Oxford Market after the shops were closed, I often saw an elderly tradesman standing at the open door of his shuttered shop smoking his evening pipe. Partly to pass the time, but also to give me an ostensible reason for waiting there, I got into conversation with him, and spent hours chatting, with one eye over the road. One night, when the streets seemed strangely quiet and deserted, so

that I could hear the continuous roar of the traffic in Oxford Street, I saw a well-dressed man walking from that direction followed closely by a boy, who in turn was followed, at some distance, by two rough-looking men, one on each side of the road, and, much to my satisfaction, I recognised the three followers as the men we had already noted in other places.

I called the attention of my tradesman friend to the parties, and then he almost electrified me by telling me that he had often seen the two rough-looking men and the boy round there at about that time of night and wondered what their game was. He said that the boy appeared to beg from gentlemen, and then the two rough-looking men came up and interfered; they generally appeared excited, and usually the four walked away together.

I had now no doubt at all that we had recognised the three men referred to in the anonymous letters, and we had obtained sufficient evidence against them by our watchings to have dealt with them as suspected persons. I had in view, however, that I might yet rid the public of them for a long period on a more serious charge, so we persevered with our observation, and one night one of the three men was followed to a low-class beer-house in a back street near Oxford Market, where he was seen to join the other two. This proved to be their regular meeting-place, and it was there that we finally arrested them. Much remained to be done, however, before this took place. We first found out where the men were living—two of them at common lodging-houses—and then we got the names by which they were known. With this, and the

knowledge we now had of their faces, we searched for their records, and found, as I expected, that they were all criminals with several convictions behind them.

Now the only thing remaining was to find a prosecutor, but this was likely to prove very difficult. The Senior Magistrate at Marlborough Street Police Court, at which the case would in the ordinary course be taken, was at that time Sir Robert Newton. Fortunately, I stood so well with him that I was able to approach him privately to ask his advice. I placed my cards on the table, and he, being a strong-minded gentleman and a keen magistrate, grasped the position at once, and became almost as interested as I was. He appreciated my difficulty, and decided that, considering the nature of the crimes that were being committed by these men, apparently with impunity, something should be done even if some red tape had to be broken. He promised to grant me a warrant for the arrest of the three men, on my own information, providing I could get a signed statement from a credible person upon whom an attempt to blackmail had been made, and he undertook to issue a summons to compel this person to attend the court as a witness. With my hands thus strengthened, I caused the observation to be continued in order to get this witness.

Fortune was at last kind, for one night soon after, my two assistants, while watching the suspects, saw them accost a stranger, and, after taking him through several quiet streets, the three men hurriedly left him. My assistants spoke to this man, and with some difficulty persuaded him to accompany them to the police station, where they introduced him to me.

He proved to be just the witness we wanted. He was a business man of some standing, and the three men had made a deliberate attempt to extort money from him by menaces, and this while they were under the observation of my two officers. They had caught a tartar this time, for he proved to be a hard-headed North-countryman, and, while he was still excited and full of indignation, he gave me his name and address, and I wrote what he had to say in the form of a statement, read it over to him, and he signed it in our presence.

Having verified his name and address, I lost no time, and wrote out an Information embodying his statement. The next day I saw Sir Robert Newton in his private room at the court, when he at once granted me warrants for the arrest of the three men, and we arrested them that night at the beer-house referred to. We were prepared to have a rough time with them, although we carried no handcuffs, no revolvers, not even a truncheon—detectives seldom do, except in fiction. Their struggles were like those of a big fish when first hooked—tables, stools, and chairs were overturned and glasses and pots flew about. There was no question of reading the warrants then, as things were much too lively; but we got the men to the police station safely, and, when I read the warrants to them there, I do not think I ever addressed a more morose and villainous-looking trio.

Two of the prisoners were big, rough-looking fellows, each about fifty years of age, and about the size and stamp of police officers. The other, the decoy, who had sometimes been referred to as a boy, proved to



be twenty-six years of age, but he was made up to look young, and, on occasions, was known to have painted and powdered his face. He had a boyish manner, too, and spoke like a youngster, attainments no doubt acquired by long practice in his odious crimes, for he was obviously a despicable character. He described himself as a commission agent; no doubt he did undertake commissions, but they were such as do not permit of description, and had better not be thought of.

During the night one of the big men, while in the cells at the police station, collapsed, and had to be removed to hospital suffering from syncope. The other two appeared before the magistrate the next morning charged on warrants with feloniously demanding money by menaces from the man referred to. No evidence was taken, but my sworn information upon which the warrants had been granted was read, and on this they were remanded in custody.

To show exactly the methods followed by these three scoundrels, I will quote briefly from the evidence of the man who now became the prosecutor. This showed that, late in the evening on which we afterwards made his acquaintance, he was accosted by a lad who appeared to him to be about seventeen years of age, who took hold of his arm and asked him for a drink, saying that he was out of work and hard up. He tried to get away from the lad, but before he could do so the other two men came up and took hold of him, saying, "Now we have got you, you scamp! We are detectives." They then turned to the boy and asked him if anything had taken place, upon which

the boy started crying, and replied, " Yes. It is no use denying it." Then they said that they must take him and the boy to the police station, and commenced to walk with him in the direction of Tottenham Court Road ; but, after threatening him, and advising him that, as he appeared to be a man of position, he had better settle with the boy to avoid scandal, they seemed to realise that they had mistaken their man, and all ran away.

The evidence of the prosecutor was supported by my evidence and that of my assistants, who had watched the men on so many occasions, and the tradesman, who had really been the first to identify the three men to me, came forward and proved that he had seen them frequently for months past, and recognised the youngest prisoner from a cut on his lip where he had struck him three months before. Finally the prisoners were committed for trial at the Central Criminal Court, where they pleaded guilty, and all received long terms of penal servitude.

## CHAPTER IX

### FRAGMENTS—A CLERICAL IMPOSTOR : A BLOTTING-PAD CLUE

THE annals of crime record no easier method of swindling than that adopted by the clerical impostor, especially if he is of benevolent and sanctimonious appearance. That the "Rev. George St. Clair Greenwood, B.A., incumbent, St. Jude's Mission Church," as his visiting-cards proclaimed him, was endowed by nature with all the qualities necessary to deceive the charitably inclined no one who saw him in the dock could have any doubt. He had a broad, high forehead, large, soft eyes, and a frank, open expression, which, with his plausible manner and neat clerical dress, proclaimed him to the uninitiated a model clergyman. I really believe that it was his natural resemblance to the "curate type" that suggested to him the particular line of roguery to which he faithfully adhered during a long career of crime.

It is nearly a quarter of a century since I first met this gentleman, and even then he had served several terms of penal servitude. In fact, it was after his release on licence from a five-years' sentence that he and his methods first came under my notice. His initial step, after once more joining the outer world, was to fail in his duty of reporting himself to the police. He fitted himself out with a neat but good clerical suit, bought with the money he had earned in

prison and presented to him on his release to help him to make "a fresh start"—which he did.

As a field for operations he chose a town near Brighton. There he rented "The People's Mission Hall," and furnished it at heavy cost—on credit. He then set about seeking subscriptions from the charitable to support his mission. He met with extraordinary success, particularly as he was not a man of education, and five minutes' conversation would have betrayed him to a genuine clergyman. But Mr. Greenwood was never caught in this way. He always declined such a conversation in a few well-chosen words learned for this purpose.

He soon visited Brighton, posing as a clergyman established in a neighbouring town, and there obtained clothing and other valuable articles from old-established shops. When the accounts were rendered, they found him—or rather they found him not—for, having got as much money and credit as he thought was consistent with safety, he went quietly away. At the last service held at his mission hall he chose the text, "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing."

One of the Channel Islands saw him next, still "doing good" with a mission hall. He issued a printed address to the public, claiming that he had received a "call" to save "cabmen, 'bus drivers, and livery stablemen." It is probably a reflection on these classes that subscriptions poured in handsomely.

A criminal is as often recognised by his method of crime as by his personal description, and when the police on the island had their suspicions aroused, and

communicated with headquarters, I was despatched to the island, feeling sure that I should find ex-convict B 504 there. And so it proved. We left next day in company, and the dwellers in Sleepy Hollow, as the lovely island is called, gathered in strength upon the quay to see their self-sent missionary off. He was still neatly attired in clerical dress, playing his part to the last.

After a gap of years I heard of my friend the missionary in Dublin, where he had a long and successful run. This time he was "The Rev. S. J. B. Stanhope, B.A., of Our Saviour's Missionary Army and The Stanhope Convalescent Home for the Benefit of Irish People." In Dublin he had sent round, as before, a printed leaflet in which he asked for the modest sum of £600 to assist him in setting up a home for ladies. In another circular he actually announced a well-known lady as president and a noted doctor as honorary physician, though neither of them had ever heard of him. His victims were usually rich ladies who were deceived by his personal attractions. He so far bamboozled one woman as to promise to marry her and settle down to spend her fortune on good works. Perhaps it was his weakness for this lady that caused him to tarry too long in Dublin, and me to take my stand for the first time "on the top of a table" to give evidence in an Irish court. Mr. Justice Gibson, in sentencing him to five years' penal servitude, said that, if there was any form of crime that revolted a decent citizen more than another, it was fraud carried out under the blasphemous pretence of promoting Christianity and charity.

Despite this denunciation and the sentence which

accompanied it, I was some years afterwards once more present at this man's trial, this time in London, where for exactly similar frauds he was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude.

### A BLOTTING-PAD CLUE

It often happens that the police are called upon to investigate mysteries which in the end prove to be in no way connected with crime. The case of "The Blotting-pad Clue" is an interesting example of this.

Mr. and Mrs. Murray lived in a fashionable town in Kent, where they were known, as well-to-do gentle-folk, with a great affection for each other. They had been married some years, but had no children. This was a great disappointment to Mr. Murray, who was passionately fond of children.

About two years before the time at which I became acquainted with the family he had endeavoured to fill the blank in the home circle by prevailing upon his wife to adopt the orphan son of a poor and distant relative. A carefully selected nurse was engaged; and, as the child grew under her care, the husband saw more and more of it, and became so fond of it that his extravagant attentions to the baby made him appear almost ridiculous.

Mr. Murray and his wife were in the habit of visiting London occasionally, sometimes together, sometimes separately. But, whether together or apart, they always put up at the same private hotel off Oxford Street.

This was the condition of affairs when I first appeared on the scene in my capacity as detective. I was at work in my office in Marylebone Lane one morning when Mr. Murray was announced. He was evidently distressed, and in a shy and embarrassed manner explained that his adopted child had been stolen the day before. His wife and the adopted son had been staying at the private hotel off Oxford Street while he remained in the country. He had been summoned to town by telegram, to find that the child had been stolen, apparently by the nurse, who had been discharged. Mr. Murray now begged my assistance to clear up the mystery of the child's whereabouts.

My first step was to accompany him to the hotel and interview his wife. She appeared to me to be much more anxious and nervous on her husband's account than distressed at the loss of the child. I gathered from Mrs. Murray that all arrangements had been made for the nurse to leave the day before. She had taken her luggage away in the morning, but had returned later and taken the child out in the afternoon. Since then neither of them had been seen.

Obviously it was my first duty to trace the nurse, although Mrs. Murray appeared anxious to shield her. She admitted, however, that the nurse had taken the child out in her absence and without her authority. A search of the bedrooms occupied by the nurse and her charge merely revealed the fact that the child had been taken away with only the clothing it usually wore out of doors. I glanced round the private sitting-room and picked up some soiled sheets of blotting-paper from a pad on the table and put them in my

pocket. In a sub-conscious way I thought they might offer a clue.

I subsequently found that the nurse's luggage had been taken away from the hotel in a cab. Two days' systematic enquiry brought me the number of the driver, and I saw him at his yard when he came in at midnight.

I learned that he had taken the luggage to the Brighton station at Victoria, and had seen a porter remove it from the cab. That was all he knew. The porter was easily traced, and he stated that he had deposited the luggage in the cloak-room. The cloak-room attendant remembered the outside porter who had removed it. It proved that he had placed it on a cab, but beyond that enquiries were fruitless.

Meanwhile I turned my attention to the blotting-paper. I had preserved it carefully, as I noticed at the time that my taking it appeared visibly to startle Mrs. Murray.

Enlarged photographs of the sheets were made, and from these I managed to decipher many words and some sentences. There were two impressions that particularly attracted my attention. One was evidently part of a letter, and ran as near as possible as follows :

“ . . . I . . . ll . . . t . . . y . . . h . . .  
the . . . ch . . . d . . . in . . . the . . .  
t . . . of . . . R . . . adin . . . and Windsor  
. . . e . . . at . . . Waterloo Station . . .  
clock Tuesday afternoon.

“ Yours truly,

“ ADA MURRAY.”



The second impression was quite clear, and was evidently an address written on an envelope as follows :

“ Mrs. Williams,  
“ Rose Cottage,  
“ George Street,  
“ Windsor.”

The word “ Windsor ” in the letter made me connect it with the address. The letter evidently referred to the child, and I remembered that it was on Tuesday afternoon that it was taken away. A little study, facilitated by the dots, which were very distinct, enabled me to fill in the blanks to my satisfaction. My version read as follows :

“ I will meet you with the child in the waiting-room of the Reading and Windsor line at Waterloo Station — o’clock Tuesday afternoon.

“ Yours truly,  
“ ADA MURRAY.”

I went to Windsor on the following day, and, by discreet enquiries, learned that Mrs. Williams was a highly respectable widow in receipt of a small pension from the Castle, her husband having died in the royal service. I went direct to her, and told her that I had come from Mrs. Murray to see how the child was getting on. She was not in the least disturbed, and apparently had nothing to conceal. I saw the boy, who was evidently happy and well cared for. I merely expressed my satisfaction and came away.

I had now the unpleasant task of seeing Mr. Murray and acquainting him with his wife’s deception. I saw the couple together at the hotel, and as delicately

as I could told the husband that the child was safe and in good hands, and added that no doubt his wife would explain. I was sorry for the poor lady. Her distress was evident as, in a state bordering upon collapse, she was led by her husband to another room. I waited a long time until the husband returned to me. He had a cheery expression on his face, and told me significantly over a whisky and a cigar that the child would remain where it was for the present.

## CHAPTER X

### THE BEGGING-LETTER IMPOSTOR

To become a begging-letter gentleman is a charmingly simple matter—and pleasantly profitable. All you want are impudence, an *Army List*, *Who's Who*, a medical directory, and writing materials. These books may all be seen at a free library. So your stock-in-trade can be reduced to the absolute minimum of paper, pen, and ink.

I say begging-letter "gentleman" because this branch of crime is essentially a genteel one. It entails no vulgar acts of violence or theft, little risk, and no more labour than that which usually falls upon the shoulders of a man who attends to his own private correspondence. On the other hand, it requires a certain knowledge of the usages of polite society and the learned professions, and an appearance of gentility, in the matter of frock-coat and top hat, which usually clings to those who have seen "better days."

This respectable gentleman of fallen fortunes, when funds are low, may be seen in a free library, studiously making notes from biographical lists of officers, doctors, and other professional men. Later on he will claim acquaintance with the men whose names he notes down, and furnish incidents which occurred while they were in the regiment on campaign together or during their studentship in hospital or college. He rarely selects clergymen, for the reason, I suppose, that their experience of charity and its dispensation

makes them difficult subjects from his point of view.

Begging-letter writers do not always work in this way. Their dodges are as innumerable as they are clever. I knew one venerable old gentleman who used to watch suburban newspapers for the report of an accident or any other occurrence likely to appeal to the sympathies of a particular locality. Having selected his paragraph, he would buy a copy of the paper and draw up an ingeniously worded appeal, with subscription list attached, for the assistance of some person referred to in the report. He would head the list with the name of some local big-wig, add one or two fictitious subscriptions, and then start a house-to-house canvass.

In this way he would collect money to provide some poor victim of misfortune with a mangle, a washing-machine, or the means to start a fried-fish shop. This canvass was made on one day only, generally in the afternoon, and was confined to quiet, middle-class streets.

This house-to-house canvass had the drawback of exposing the operator to some risk, for the police sometimes asked awkward questions and insisted on verifying the answers they received. As a result of these questions the old man often disappeared for long periods, until, becoming incorrigible, he was sometimes away for twelve months at a time. He persisted in clinging to this form of imposture until he became so venerable that one felt ashamed to have to arrest him in public. His very appearance induced sympathy and respect.

He was an exceptional example of the begging impostor; he took greater risks than his more conventional colleagues, but his returns were probably correspondingly bigger. The operations of his fellows were carried on entirely by correspondence. They received their letters at small shops which make a practice of accommodating customers with obscure addresses. These addresses were changed as frequently as the aliases, thus reducing the risk of detection.

I remember one case in which there was a special run on doctors in the provinces by a man who, for this purpose, took the names of London medical men with small practices. He would write, personating one or other of these doctors, to country practitioners who, he saw from the medical directory, had been students with the one whom he represented for the occasion. His letters would run somewhat as follows :

“MY DEAR SMITH,—I am in a bit of a hole for want of a little ready cash. I am going to trespass on our old friendship by asking you to lend me, by return of post, a few pounds to make up a sum which I am bound to pay on Thursday or, at the latest, on Friday.

“My practice at Notting Hill is in the market, and I will return the loan in a week or two. I know I can rely upon your sympathy. I will write more fully upon hearing from you.

“Faithfully yours,

“GEORGE FRAMPLING JONES.

“P.S.—Please send it in an easily negotiable form, as I am pressed for time.”

The doctor in whose name he wrote actually had a practice in Notting Hill, although it was not in the market. The doctors in the country, looking up particulars of their correspondent in the medical directory, and conjecturing that he had already left his practice, would, if they replied at all, write to the address given by the swindler. Even if only a small percentage replied the swindler made a very good thing out of the numerous "few pounds" which came to hand. The victims were, of course, not written to more fully, and, realising that they had been swindled, some of them complained to the police, and the matter was placed in my hands for investigation.

It was usually impossible to get a description of the swindler from the shop where he received his letters, as he took the precaution of sending a boy for them. The money, too, was usually sent in that "easily negotiable form," the postal order, which offered no clue. I sent out a request to many proprietors of shops where letters were received to give me notice immediately they received any letters addressed to doctors. At some of the shops I found letters so addressed which had remained unclaimed, and these furnished many instances of fraud which had not been notified to the police.

One morning the keeper of a small newsagent's shop in a byway off Oxford Street sent word that three letters had arrived addressed to Dr. Jones, and I at once arranged with him to trace the person applying for them. He fixed me up in the back parlour of his shop, and before long a small boy applied for the letters, producing a slip of paper stating that he was

authorised to do so by Dr. Jones. The letters were handed to the boy, and I cautiously followed him from the shop. I had previously glanced at the note the boy had given to the shopkeeper and, to my great satisfaction, saw that the handwriting was similar to that of the fraudulent letters which had been referred to me.

The street down which I followed the boy was crowded with market stalls and shoppers, so there was little risk of my purpose being detected by the person who had sent the boy on his errand and would, I judged, be keeping observation upon him. The boy stopped in Oxford Street, outside a large public-house, and there an elderly gentleman of the shabby genteel type I have described hurried up, snatched away the letters, and darted into the public-house bar. He called for a glass of brandy, and then left by a door leading into a side street. I made sure that he did not part with the letters—in fact, I saw him place them in the lining of his hat. I tapped him on the shoulder as the public-house door swung to behind him.

“Dr. Jones?” I asked.

He turned pale, and answered sharply: “No, you have made a mistake,” turning as though to walk away. But I detained him, and said: “If you are not Dr. Jones, what are you doing with those letters addressed to him?” “Letters?” he replied. “I have no letters.” I lifted his hat from his head and showed him the three letters in the lining.

These, I found later, contained a cheque for ten pounds from a doctor in Devonshire, postal orders

for three pounds from a doctor at Reigate, and postal orders for two pounds from a doctor at Oxford. I charged him with unlawful possession of these securities, and a magistrate remanded him for a week in order that other and more serious charges might be formulated against him. During the remand he was identified as an old offender, and we arranged for three of his many victims to appear against him.

On their evidence, supported by mine, that of the boy, and a handwriting expert, our prisoner was committed for trial for forging an endorsement to a cheque and for fraud. His plea of "guilty" speedily brought him a fresh term of penal servitude.



## CHAPTER XI

### CAPTAIN REGINALD HERBERT JONES

He was a distinguished-looking, well-set-up man of good address, and untroubled by a conscience. He bore his many years of imprisonment so philosophically that time seemed to stand still with him. Many years before he had been arrested by a well-known detective-inspector for a series of frauds upon women, and on his release, after a long term of penal servitude, he took a humorous revenge by adopting the name of the inspector who had secured his conviction. Under this alias he light-heartedly married two ladies and deceived a number of others.

A fact that did not become public was that the bogus inspector had the audacity to drive up to the real inspector's office in a cab, with one of his women victims, on some business concerning his own conviction. He left the lady in the cab outside "while he gave instructions to some of his men." Women were always his dupes, and it may well be imagined that a criminal with such confidence and effrontery, good looks, fine physique, and plausible manners, committed many crimes which were never reported to the police.

Captain Reginald Herbert Jones (this was his name when I made his acquaintance) claimed to be one of the Jones of Yorkshire and an Army officer. He knew so little about the Army, however, that he cautiously refrained from naming the regiment he had

served in. Neither did he say if he was on half or full pay ; as a matter of fact, he was on no pay. He hadn't even served in the Militia or Volunteers. With commendable lack of ostentation, he had merely his name : " Captain Reginald Herbert Jones," printed on his cards. As he did not attempt to get into polite society or into the War Office, his claim to military rank was never questioned.

He was stalwart and erect and the bronze on his face was calculated to give one the impression that he had just returned from foreign service—a false idea for, actually, he had just returned from service on Dartmoor. This, with the handiness he showed in doing little things for himself, his evident ignorance of London's more recent improvements, plays and other matters, all tended to the belief that he had really been on foreign service.

His good behaviour in prison, for such men always earn full marks there, had enabled him to draw three or four pounds gratuity on his release. This, with his personal belongings which the police had taken such great care of during his imprisonment, enabled him to make a fair impression on the landlady of a well-appointed apartment-house near Westbourne Square. The landlady was a buxom, middle-aged, maiden lady, who had retired after long service in various good families, and had invested part of her savings in this little house.

He soon gained her confidence, for although he said little and lived a quiet, retired life, he sent himself a few telegrams and letters addressed " Captain Reginald Herbert Jones," and got her to despatch

others for him, addressed to mythical officials of high rank at various well-known hotels, and at the War Office. Although his wires remained unclaimed at their destination, or were returned "Unknown," they answered his purpose by making a great impression on the landlady.

He had selected his victim with judgment born of long experience, and he played her very carefully. He reasoned that as his capital was very small, time would not allow him to go in for a high stake. He therefore determined to try for sufficient to start him in a new field, with more capital, where he would have the additional advantage of not being known to the police. The terms of his ticket-of-leave had already compelled him to report his address to them.

My readers may wonder how he could carry on this bare-faced swindle while actually under police supervision. But everyone can call to mind instances in which a sentimental public has cried "Shame!" when some poor ticket-of-leave man has alleged as the cause of his relapse into crime that he had been shown up by the police at his lodgings or at his work. In this case a smartly-dressed detective officer had called at the residence of Captain Jones to verify his address and to enquire how he was employed. He asked for Mr. Jones, having received notice from him that he had adopted that name, but knowing that it was an alias. The landlady saw him and told him that "Captain" Jones was out, and asked if he was a friend of the captain. The officer dared not tell the landlady that her lodger was no captain; and not his friend, for he knew that if he injured the man by

his enquiry the public would take up the cudgels for him, so he replied with due discretion.

Captain Jones soon began to pay delicate attentions to his landlady and she, foolish woman, thinking that at last she had got a chance worth waiting for, encouraged him. Leading her to think that he was infatuated with her, he spoke of his great expectations and of his rich relations who, he feared, would not consent to his marriage with her. Then he received a letter, written by himself in a disguised hand, telling him of the imminent decease of an aunt, whose will would make him a rich man. He showed the landlady this, and did her the honour to ask her hand and her heart, conditionally, however, upon her keeping their engagement a strict secret, for fear he should endanger his prospects.

Then came a telegram, in the name of a well-known firm of lawyers, announcing the death of his aunt, and asking his presence at once in Ireland, to take over his estate.

He embraced his landlady as he showed her the telegram that, by making him independent of the opinion of his family, removed every obstacle to their early union. It was past four o'clock in the afternoon and presently, when he recovered from the excitement of the good news, he realised how awkwardly he was placed. His bank was closed, he must take an early train in the morning, and he had a lot of things, including mourning, that he must get that night. His friend Colonel James was out of town, the War Office was closed, and he had not even the cash necessary for the railway journey.

He said : "What a confounded nuisance that I bought those shares this morning. I know no one who will cash a cheque for me." She said : "My dear, you are giving me yourself and a fortune ; all I have is yours. I have about fifty pounds, and if that is not enough, some jewellery." He would not hear of such a thing, but she persuaded him, and when he left in the morning he had seventy-five pounds, and she had an IOU for that amount and some pawn-tickets.

She did not see him again until I brought about a meeting between them some twelve months later. I found him in a smart apartment-house near Dorset Square. Here he had married the landlady, and was so comfortable that he lingered longer than was his custom. The poor woman was keeping him, in anticipation of the usual fortune, and while living under her roof he started another scheme that proved his downfall.

He advertised in a morning paper for a housekeeper to a nobleman, applications to be made by letter to "Captain Reginald Smith," 16 — Street, Dorset Square, W. He thus got into communication with several housekeepers, to whom he described himself as secretary to a nobleman, then abroad, but shortly to return to his estate in Blankshire, and said that he was to engage a housekeeper for him, on terms comprising a liberal salary and board-wages until his lordship returned.

His idea, no doubt, was to defraud these women in the same manner as he had done many others, although he was still living as the lodger and husband of his

latest victim. One of these women happened to be great friends with a butler in a nobleman's family in London, in which she at one time served. She told him all about the engagement concerning which she was negotiating with Captain Smith, the secretary to this certain noble lord. The butler, who had an intimate knowledge of this nobleman's family, knew that he had no secretary, and was not likely to engage a housekeeper, so he came to my office and saw me.

Knowing the convict's methods, I at once associated him with the matter, and took steps to find out if my suspicion was correct. The next night, about nine o'clock, the inspector whose name the scoundrel had so misused years before joined me, and we kept observation outside the apartment-house near Dorset Square. Not more than an hour passed before a stalwart, well-set-up man approached the house, and as he let himself in with a latchkey, my companion said: "That's the man." We allowed him to enter, and a minute later saw a light appear in the second-floor front room. We knocked at the door, a servant opened it, and as we pushed by her we said: "We are just going to have a word with Captain Smith."

We went straight up to his room and quietly opened the door. He was sitting with his back to us, humming a merry tune. I have no doubt that he expected a visit from his landlady, for he turned with an air of lordly dignity and condescension. Then a marvellous change came over his face and bearing, and what with him and the furniture, there was such a row for a minute or two that the landlady rushed into the

room in great alarm and exclaimed : “ Reggie, dear, what is it ? What are these men doing ? ”

When we had our prisoner safely lodged at the police-station, I returned to the poor landlady, and she told me the story of the deception he had practised upon her. She and the lady of the house near Westbourne Square were compelled to prosecute him, in the public interest, and he got seven years. Before he had been out long from this sentence I again arrested him for similar offences, and he went to prison once more. I believe he is at liberty as I write these lines. If he reads them, as he probably will, they may cause him some uneasiness, lest some intended victim should be put on her guard by them.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE GREAT BURGLARY AT THE DIAMOND MERCHANTS ALLIANCE

MANY years have passed since London was startled by the great burglary at the Diamond Merchants Alliance, Piccadilly, but even now, when thieves make an extraordinary big haul, this case is often brought up for comparison. It is certainly a robbery that stands out above most others, not only on account of the enormous amount of jewellery stolen, but because of the daring and cleverness of the thieves and the total inability of the police to bring the crime home to them or to trace the stolen property.

Master cracksmen such as these never associate with each other except when some big coup is planned requiring the services of more than one of them. Then each man takes his part with verve and efficiency. In public they are professional men, hotel proprietors, commercial agents, or diamond merchants—anything, in fact, that will cover them with a cloak of obvious respectability.

Members of a gang which meets on rare occasions when thousands of pounds of booty are at stake do not necessarily live near the scenes of their crimes. One may run an hotel in Manchester, another a commission agency in Birmingham, while a third may be a diamond merchant at Hatton Garden. Their crimes, too, are carried out as opportunity offers. They may operate in the West End of London, the



Strand, the City, in Manchester, Glasgow, or any other centre where there are jewellers' shops worthy of attention.

In this case their choice fell upon a citadel well fortified against attack from the outside. It was considered so impregnable that it had been described as a huge safe. The premises consisted of one large shop on the ground floor. It was absolutely shut off on the inside from the huge building surrounding it. It had a frontage in Piccadilly, but the entrance was in a side street.

At closing time the shop was cased in iron shutters, and the servants of the firm passed out through a small door in the shutter which protected the larger public doorway. This small opening in the shutter was covered by a heavy sheet of iron like the door of a huge safe, and was secured from the outside with wonderfully made burglar-proof locks. The whole shop was lined—top, bottom, and sides—with steel and cement.

The closing of the massive outer iron door was a solemn and important ceremony. The manager or one of the partners in the firm was always present as it clanged to, and always tested those cunning locks before the great jewel storehouse was deserted for the night. But the steel and cement, the iron shutters, the massive door and the cunning locks proved insufficient to protect the huge safe from the genius of the master cracksman.

One Monday morning, just after I had arrived at my office, I received an urgent call to the shop of the Diamond Merchants Alliance. I hurried up Piccadilly

and passed into the shop through the iron door. The place was in darkness, for the windows were still armoured with their iron shutters. Just across the threshold I found the manager and his assistants in a group, silent and pale, awaiting my arrival.

As usual, they had performed the complicated operation of unlocking the iron door in the shutter, but as it swung back they realised that something had happened since it had been closed on the previous Saturday afternoon. It was light enough to see that the shop had been stripped of all the jewellery worth taking. There were few signs of disorder in the place, and no attempt had been made to force the safe. Not an ounce of pure gold or silver had been taken; the thieves had chosen nothing but jewels in their settings. Plate, watches and chains were untouched.

I had the shutters opened, and the light revealed the fact that the two bolts which fastened the bottom of the side shutter—the one into which the iron door fitted—were gone. These bolts were pushed through the shutter from the outside, and secured by a nut inside before the last employee passed out through the iron door. The shutter was also secured from the inside at the bottom by a bolt at each side of it, fastened, and only to be opened, from the inside. But when we examined the shutter we found them unfastened. The manager, and the assistant who had closed the shop on the Saturday, were certain that the bolts had been driven well home. With the two bolts pushed through from the outside withdrawn, and the side bolts inside unfastened, I found, despite the heavy door which was fixed in it, that this shutter

could be raised sufficiently high for a man to crawl underneath.

The manager put forward a theory that one of the thieves must have been concealed in the shop when it was closed. This was possible, but not probable, unless connived at by someone in the shop. But if the entrance had been effected from the outside, how came the two inside bolts to be unfastened? It appeared impossible, and the connivance of someone inside the shop again suggested itself. The stock was insured, but the entry into this apparently impregnable shop was so mysterious and incredible that the claim was at first disputed by the insurance companies. They paid as soon as it was conclusively proved that there had indeed been a burglary.

Admitting the burglary, when had it been committed—on Saturday, Sunday, or early on Monday morning? What were the police on the beat doing? What had happened to the twenty thousand pounds' worth of jewellery which had vanished? Was anyone in the shop concerned? All these questions had to be dealt with. I will endeavour to reconstruct this remarkable burglary, and explain the mystery in the light in which time and investigation have enabled me to see it.

The key to the mystery was held by a man of staid and dignified appearance, aged about fifty or sixty, reputed to be of independent means and living a well-to-do bachelor's life in a flat in Dover Street. This gentleman was an international criminal, and a criminal from choice, not from necessity. He was a man of education, of refined tastes; he was well

travelled, an accomplished linguist, and led a sober and regular life. He was keen on literature, art, and the theatre, and was a connoisseur of jewellery. He took the waters at Homburg, indulged in the cure at Biarritz, gambled in a gentlemanly fashion at Monte Carlo—he always followed the tide of fashion, always in the artistic pursuit of money.

He would watch for his opportunities, carefully analyse the risks and the probabilities of success, and then, as often as not, decide that his scheme was too dangerous, and go back to his books and his music. But when he decided on a scheme he became busy. He prepared plans, measurements, models; he wrote down arguments for and against his scheme and balanced them in his mind; he worked out calculations, and then, when he had scientifically assured himself that no normal occurrence could prevent his success, he calmly carried out his scheme without hurry or worry.

Artist though he was, it must be announced cold-bloodedly that he was, before all, a burglar. He never dabbled in any other form of crime. Usually he aimed at jewellery—that is, precious stones only. So long as they were fine jewels—jewels that he could feel proud of—he did not mind if they were in a hotel, a steamboat, a country mansion, or a jeweller's shop. He never stole from the person, and violence he considered too vulgar to be included in his schemes. He relied on his tact and his knowledge of the world.

Single-handed robberies he carried out himself. If two or three hands were necessary, he communicated with a man in Manchester, one in Glasgow, one in

Bristol, one in Hatton Garden, and so on. These men were not strangers to him. They were tried criminals—though not tried in a court of law; he could rely upon them, and they respected his genius as leader. The work, too, that they undertook with him generally meant a thousand pounds or more each.

The gentleman of the Dover Street flat one day cast his professional eye on the “burglar-proof” shop of the Diamond Merchants Alliance. He noted with keen pleasure the dazzling display of gems in the window; he became a customer, and noted the treasures of the showcases inside, and, incidentally, he discovered that the place was considered so safe, with its cement and steel lining and its iron door and shutters, that no caretaker slept on the premises. He chanced to be in the shop one afternoon at closing time, and he watched with placid interest the adjustment of the shutters and the massive door. His quick mind grasped the principle on which they were worked.

As the place was considered impregnable, jewellery of enormous value was left in the windows and showcases instead of being secured in the safe. This fact did not escape him. Gradually the gentleman of the Dover Street flat drew up a little mental catalogue of these and other useful facts.

Two of these unwritten entries may be summarised as follows :

The shop is closed at one o'clock on Saturdays ;  
and at two o'clock, when the police shift changes,

the side street, where the entrance to the shop is, is crowded with work-girls, apprentices, and clerks intent on their holiday.—Good.

At this hour, too, there is in Piccadilly a strange absence of anyone who matters. Gentlemen of leisure and business are at lunch or taking their ease. The porter at the hotel next door is also at lunch, or at any rate is not required at the front door.—Good.

The gentleman of the Dover Street flat selected two o'clock on Saturday as the time at which he would call for the jewels that most pleased him.

In his visits to the shop as a customer he had seen that when the stern iron door was placed in position in the iron shutter in the side street, the shutter, if unfastened at the bottom, could be lifted, with the door in it, high enough to allow a man to crawl underneath. He took into account also that this side shutter was secured inside at the bottom, by flat steel bolts which formed part of the shutter, and, when the shutter was down, were pressed home into a slot, the head of the bolt being slightly curled out from the shutter; also that when these bolts were in position inside, two bolts were passed through the bottom of the shutter from the outside, through the sides of the steel slot into which it fitted, and fastened inside with nuts.

The shop was undoubtedly secure in front, with its plate-glass windows protected by iron shutters. But the shutter in the side street, in which was the iron door covering the entrance to the shop, was



secured only by the two bolts passed through it, with their heads outside, and the two bolts inside. There were thus only four bolts between the gentleman of the Dover Street flat and some twenty thousand pounds' worth of jewellery.

What I relate now is absolute fact, although it may seem impossible.



At two o'clock one Saturday afternoon, the shop having been securely closed at one, three workmen carrying a basket of tools entered the side street from Piccadilly and stopped in front of the iron shutter in which the iron door was fixed, six yards from Piccadilly. They dropped their basket of tools on the pavement near the shutter and close to the steps of the hotel next door, and set to work calmly on the shutter. A few blows with a cold chisel cut off the heads of the two bolts outside, so that they could be pushed through the shutter into the shop. But what about the remaining two bolts, fastened on the inside? Here came in the master-mind.

The men were provided with a stiff flat piece of steel, like a long, broad chisel. It was perhaps two feet long, and on the end of it was welded a piece of flat steel, thinner than the main arm and about three inches long. This thin piece stood out from the end of the long piece at an angle of forty-five degrees.

They hammered this V-shaped end under the shutter. As it passed between the floor and the bottom of the shutter the V closed until it came out beyond the shutter inside, then it sprang into its former position. With a few taps of the hammer the operator worked this flat iron bar along under the


  


ORDINARY SMALL JEMMY  
THEY ARE MADE MUCH LARGER, SOME 5 OR 6 FT. LONG AND JOINTED (*see page 54*)

THE DIAMOND MERCHANTS ALLIANCE CASE (*see page 112*)

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THE ONLY INSTRUMENT USED IN THE "CAT" BURGLARY (*see page 189*)





shutter to the curled ends of the side bolts, first on one side, then on the other.

In each case, when it had got beyond the curled end, the man outside pulled the flat bar towards him until the piece of steel standing up caught the curled head of the side bolt. Then with a knock of the hammer on the end of the bar outside, sideways, the bolt was shot out of its slot. The instrument acted in the same way as a finger and thumb, gripping the head of the bolt. The shutter was now lifted as high as the heavy door in it would permit, and two men passed under it to the inside.

They were not inside long. When they came out they pulled down the shutter and tidied up. Everything appeared as usual, except that the heads of two small bolts were missing. Of the many people who passed the men during the few minutes they were at work not one noticed them sufficiently to be able to describe them.

And what about the jewellery? I will wager that within an hour of the time these men got hold of it, all the gold was broken up and in the melting-pot, while the stones represented only so many carats.

A simple scheme, but it wanted a master-mind to think it out.

## CHAPTER XIII

### A SYNDICATE OF FORGERS

FORGERS are no respecters of persons, and will quite as readily draw upon a bishop's account as upon that of the King himself. This is no figure of speech, for, as a matter of fact, I once arrested a man who forged our late King's cheque, but he was not one of the syndicate responsible for the forgery of the bishop's cheque, referred to later.

The King's cheque was a genuine one, drawn by one of his equerries, in payment of a private account due from His Majesty to a tradesman. The cheque was stolen, probably after delivery by post, then the crossing was carefully removed, the tradesman's endorsement forged, and it was presented at the counter of the bank for payment.

What followed shows how complete the information of a forger should be to ensure success. He did not know that the tradesman in question had an account at the same bank, into which he would naturally pay the cheque and, if he wanted cash, draw against it with his own cheque. This is one of the little chances a forger has to reckon with ; that he had not done so in this case got him seven years.

The syndicate that I refer to got over all these difficulties, and had a very successful run, until they took on the bishop's cheque, and this proved their downfall. Moral: Forgers should leave bishops' cheques alone.

It will be sufficient for my story to say that this syndicate consisted of three men and one woman. One of the men was a gentleman, who took no part in the actual forgeries. He belonged to several good clubs, and, being well known in society, was able to obtain specimen signatures for the forgers, and particulars of the banking-accounts upon which they desired to operate.

I arrested him in the smoke-room of one of the most exclusive clubs in London, into which I strolled as a member while he was taking coffee after lunch. He made no ungentlemanly fuss, and, although the smoke-room was crowded with members, I am sure not one of them had the slightest idea that anything unusual was taking place.

He received, with the others of the syndicate, a penalty equal to theirs in the imprisonment it entailed, but very unequal in all other respects, for they had little to lose, except liberty, while he lost social position, an honoured career, and everything that a gentleman values even more than liberty.

One of the other men in this syndicate was a clever forger, and made himself generally useful in other respects, but the remaining man and the woman, a very smart pair indeed, were the most active members of the party.

Amongst their numerous forgeries was that of the cheque of an old gentleman of great wealth, who lived in Manchester and had a banking account there and also in London. Having procured a specimen of his cheque, they arranged a grand coup to take place at the same moment in Manchester and in London.

They obtained stamped cheque-forms, such as are supplied to members of clubs and can be utilised for any bank, and carefully prepared a number of cheques in exact imitation of the handwriting of the wealthy old gentleman, signature included. Some were on his account in Manchester and others on that in London, for no less an amount than £900 each. Then they picked out the two best forgeries, one for each account.

The lady and the utility man went to Manchester late one evening and took rooms at the best hotel. She was particularly well dressed and very lady-like, while the man had an air of solid respectability that well became a secretary or an agent.

In the morning they looked out a suitable train by which to return to London; then the lady went to one of the best milliners and bought a smart hat. Buying this hat was a means to an end; it was a feature of their plans; but, when she tried it on, her natural love of finery caused her to lose sight of this and to suggest certain alterations. This weakness on her part proved disastrous. She took the account for the hat, and said that she would send for it presently with the money.

Then she returned to the hotel, and upon the hotel notepaper she wrote a letter to the cashier of the old gentleman's bank:

“ —, Please hand bearer seventeen fifty-pound notes, three ten-pound notes, and the balance in gold in exchange for the enclosed cheque.”

She signed it “Diana Fox,” enclosed the forged

cheque for £900, and handed it to the head porter of the hotel. She gave the porter the account from the milliner's too, with precise instructions to go to the bank, get the money, then go to the milliner's, pay the bill with the gold, and bring the balance, with the hat, to her at the railway station to catch a certain train.

Now the utility man came in, for he watched the porter leave the hotel, followed him to the bank, then to the milliner's shop. They knew that if the porter did not get the money at the bank he could not pay for the hat ; if, on the other hand, he left the bank and got the hat they knew that they had secured the money without detection.

The porter left the bank and went to the milliner's, but he remained inside until the utility man outside, who was in a tremendous funk, and knew nothing about the alterations to be made to the hat, concluded that the forgery had been discovered, so he rushed off to the railway station and warned the lady, and they fled.

Presently the porter strolled up to the railway station with a bag in one hand containing just on £900 and the hat in the other, but could not find the lady. He did not know what to do with the money, so he returned to the hotel. The hotel-manager would not have it, and sent him to the bank with it. It was no part of the bank's duty to take money back when they had paid it out on a cheque, so the bank would not have it.

Never was there an hotel-porter in such a fix, running to and fro with £900 that no one wanted.

The manager of the hotel again sent him to the bank with it, and this time they took it in, under protest, consulted their client as to disposing of it, and then found that the cheque was forged.

Now, the forger in London fared better, for he not only succeeded in cashing the cheque, but also waited for the money. While his lady was buying a hat in Manchester he was buying a portmanteau in Regent Street. He took away the account, too, and said that he would send for the portmanteau presently, with the money. Then he went to an hotel near by, had a small bottle in the lounge, and rang up a district messenger boy.

On the note paper of this hotel he wrote a letter to the cashier of the bank in London, in exactly the same terms as used by his lady in Manchester, and enclosed the other £900 forged cheque. The messenger came, and he followed him to the bank, then to the shop in Regent Street, saw him leave with the portmanteau in a cab, and drive to Euston Station, where he had arranged to receive the money and the portmanteau. He got the money, and deposited the new portmanteau in the cloak-room, where it remained until I found it.

These were only incidents in the career of these forgers. They succeeded in forging the cheque of a great actor, who, having a soul above money, troubled so little about his account that he never missed the very considerable amount they drew out of it, and when I called his attention to it in his dressing-room, between the acts, he was inclined to regard it as a huge joke.

They forged the cheque of an Irish baronet for some

three or four hundred pounds, and the lady cashed it at his bank in Dublin, where she presented an appearance so attractive that the authorities never thought of questioning her.

Then they forged the bishop's cheque, for no small amount, and cashed it without question. This sacrilegious act, however, put an end to their career, and resulted in the arrest of the whole of the members of the syndicate, for some of them foolishly bought jewellery with notes that were traced to them as part of the proceeds of this forgery.



## CHAPTER XIV

### DIAMOND JUBILEE MEMORIES

THE Diamond Jubilee brought most of the English artistocracy together in London, and a great many fashionable people from America and other countries. It also brought the aristocracy of the criminal world, and that there was not much more serious crime at the time is a lasting tribute to the vigilance and efficiency of the London Police. I suppose that London had never before had a greater influx of titled and distinguished visitors than at this time, and I am certain that it never boasted of more titled criminals. I was one of the many officers employed in the detection and suppression of crime in the West End at that time, and I can truly say that we had no rest by day, and very little by night.

Besides the "American colonel," alias Mr. Smith, with whom I have dealt in another chapter, I had through my hands an "Austrian count" and a "German baron," and both made a much longer stay in this country than they intended—as the guests of the nation.

The count, probably a Polish Jew, had already had some experience here, for years before he had served a term of imprisonment in London for his sins. I suppose he thought that this fact would have been forgotten. So it was, but police records have long memories, and, much to his disgust, when he came into their hands as an "Austrian nobleman," he was

recognised as ex-convict "Johann Schmidt," and credited with his previous conviction.

This count was a smart man. He might have made his fortune as a detective, had this been possible; in any case, he would have made a great reputation in this profession, for he was a consummate actor, and had the confidence and nerve of a "Lupin" or a "Sherlock Holmes."

He got himself invited to lunch with an earl at his house in Eaton Square, as a member of a noble family in Austria, with which the earl was distantly connected. At lunch the ex-convict made such a good impression upon the butler that this worthy took in some parcels that arrived opportunely for him during lunch and handed them to him in his cab when he left. The parcels contained only a few hundred cigars, a piece or two of jewellery, and a silk hat from his lordship's hatters in St. James's Street.

On another occasion this ex-convict lunched and dined with a nobleman at his town house in an adjacent square, and when he left in the evening the footman piled into his cab, beside him, a whole outfit of under-clothing, ties and gloves, which had arrived for him during his stay, ordered expressly for the occasion from tradesmen patronised by his lordship.

He actually obtained a sum of money from the secretary of the most exclusive club in London, by showing to his satisfaction that he was a personal friend of a royal duke, who was a member.

This sort of thing could not go on for long, however, for you cannot impose upon West End tradesmen through the medium of earls and barons, and use their

residences to receive goods obtained by fraud, without attracting the special attention of the police.

He was traced through one of the cabmen to a fashionable hotel, where he was living in a style and at a cost which befitted his title. When the books of the hotel were made up, the account was settled by an entry on the credit side : " Received five years' penal servitude."

The baron was one of the most extraordinary men I have ever handled. He was a Polish Jew, but he spoke English like a native, French like a Parisian, and several other languages. He had had an extraordinary career in Paris, where he had been sentenced to a very long term of imprisonment and expelled the country.

While in Cologne, just before the Jubilee, he had managed to steal a number of circular notes from an English gentleman who stayed with him in one of the best hotels, and he thought it worth while to pay a visit to London during the Jubilee to negotiate them. He put up at a fashionable hotel in the West End and, with his title and the status the hotel gave him, started a campaign of fraud with the stolen notes.

First he appears to have made the acquaintance of a music-hall artist at one of our principal music-halls, and represented to her that he had a proprietary interest in one of the large music-halls in Paris. He suggested an engagement for her there, and concluded it while dining with her at her establishment, promising her a sufficiently tempting salary. He dealt with her very liberally, advancing her a week's salary and a reasonable sum for travelling expenses. These terms

would have been liberal had he not paid her the amount with one of the circular notes, and received some good English sovereigns in change.

This lady did not go to Paris, for she found out that the note was stolen and its endorsement forged. She was very bitter against her deceiver, as was natural, and ultimately caused his arrest.

He dealt with the remainder of the notes in a very ingenious manner—indeed, so cleverly that he deceived some of our smartest tourist agents. He commenced at Eastbourne, where he bought two return tickets for Paris, paying for them with one of the circular notes, and receiving the balance in genuine money.

Then he came to London, and, at the West End branch of the same agents, he exchanged his two return tickets for Paris via Dover and Calais for two via Newhaven and Dieppe, and took some coupons for a Paris hotel. He paid the difference with another of the circular notes, receiving a considerable sum of money in change.

Then he went to the head office of the agents, and by representing that his wife was ill and unable to go to Paris, he exchanged his tickets for some of less value, available in England, and had the money returned for the hotel coupons. He thus got pretty well full face value in cash for the worthless stolen notes.

No class of roguery came amiss to this gentleman, for, while engaged in getting rid of these stolen notes, he got to know of a Catholic priest in charge of a district in London, who was as much noted for his simplicity as for his good works. He went to this

gentleman as the prodigal son of a noble Catholic family, which he said was then resident in Paris, and so genuine did he appear, and penitent, too, that the priest, after conferring with his bishop, decided to take the reformed sinner back to his family in Paris and intercede for his forgiveness.

They started by the night train, and arrived in Paris in the early morning, the priest paying for a return ticket for himself and a single one for the prodigal son. When they arrived in Paris the prodigal suggested a Turkish or some other bath, to enable him to present himself to his family clean and fresh-looking and at a reasonable hour. The priest thought the proposal a good one, as he was tired and dusty after the long journey, and the two went together.

It was one of those establishments in which you are advised to give your valuables into the care of an attendant, who places them in a small drawer, the key of which is handed to you. The prodigal pooled their joint valuables—his were insignificant—and placed them all together in one drawer, and he took the key. He got dressed first and claimed the valuables, which included the return half of the ticket to London and a presentation gold watch. He returned to London with the ticket and the valuables, leaving the priest in Paris, a sadder but a wiser man.

Nemesis, in the person of the lady music-hall artist, whom he had swindled on his arrival in London, overtook him at last. One night, soon after he had got back from Paris, she happened to be behind the scenes at another music-hall and spotted him in the

auditorium. She pointed him out to the manager, who had him arrested and brought to me.

He was the only prisoner I have had who refused to plead at his trial. When he was called upon to do so he was mute. The judge ordered an entry to be recorded that the prisoner was "mute of malice," and explained that years before prisoners, so judged, were removed below and tortured. At this time, however, it meant only that the prisoner was detained in custody until he had found his tongue.

He was brought up for trial the next day, and defended himself in excellent English, not with success however, for he received a long term of penal servitude, and on its expiration was handed over to the French police to take his trial for other crimes.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE CLERK AND THE CHEQUE-BOOK

THIS case should be a warning to business men, not only to be careful as to the character of the clerks they engage, but also to look particularly after their cheque-books.

I do not know how this young German obtained the post of foreign correspondent to Messrs. A. and B. Cabbac, Ltd., because when I arrested him for forgery at the expense of the firm I found that he was already wanted in several places in England for other forgeries.

He was a smart young fellow, spoke English so well that he had no difficulty in passing as an Englishman, and corresponded in this and several other languages besides his own.

He entered the employ of Messrs. A. and B. C. about Christmas, and until he failed to turn up at the office one Monday morning in the following April, he gave them every satisfaction. A day or two after this Monday, the managing director of the firm noticed that their cheque for £937 had been paid by their bankers and, although apparently in order, he could not call to mind the particular transaction to which it related.

He inquired amongst the members of the firm, casually at first, but more anxiously when he found that no one could remember the transaction. The firm's cheque-book, each sheet of which contained three cheque forms, was examined, but no counterfoil could be found with the number that corresponded with the cheque for £937. Then by carefully checking the

numbers they found that it was one of a sheet of three which had been neatly torn out of the cheque-book, counterfoils and all, and had thus been stolen and forged. The police were communicated with, and I was sent round to investigate.

I found that the firm did a very large business on the Continent, and frequently sent large cheques, drawn on their own bank close by, to a foreign banking establishment in the City, to be exchanged by this establishment for their cheque payable at their branch in Paris, Brussels, or elsewhere, for the convenience of the firm's customers at those places.

Of course, these foreign bankers were always notified by letter or telephone from the office of the firm when such an exchange was required, and, of course, they collected the money for the cheque from the firm's bank before they issued their cheque payable on the Continent.

The amount of this forged cheque had been collected by these foreign bankers from the firm's bank, and when I went to them with it they declared that it was quite in order. They had received a telephone message from Messrs. A. and B. C. the previous Friday notifying them that the firm required a cheque payable at their branch in Brussels for the equivalent in francs of £937, at the usual rate of exchange, and that young Mr. Cabbac was on the way to them with their cheque for that amount.

"Young Mr. Cabbac" duly arrived with the cheque and asked them to collect it at once from his firm's bankers and let him have their cheque on Brussels the next morning—Saturday. They collected the amount



of the cheque, prepared their cheque on Brussels, and handed it to him when he called on Saturday morning.

Enquiry by telegram to Brussels showed that their cheque for the equivalent of £937 in francs had been presented at their branch there early Monday morning and had been paid without question.

I got a description of the gentleman who said that he was "young Mr. Cabbac," and, on returning to the office of the firm, found that it corresponded with that of the young German correspondent who had been absent several days and was said to be indisposed. I went to his lodgings and was not surprised to find that his illness had not kept him at home, and that he had been away since the previous Saturday.

I never expected to find him in England, but it was evident that this country had peculiar attractions for him, for the cashing of several of the notes here that he received in Brussels made it apparent that he had returned.

In the course of my enquiry I found that he had a friend at Leeds with whom he was likely to correspond. I paid a visit to that city to see what I could learn. By a stroke of good fortune I got hold of someone in the house in which this friend lodged who knew the German and his handwriting.

In the course of time I learned that a letter had arrived in the handwriting of the young German, with the postmark "Ilfracombe." I took train for Ilfracombe.

At a large watering-place like Ilfracombe, in the middle of the season, it was no easy task to trace a particular young man, although I had the photograph and description of the one I wanted. I enquired at

boarding-houses, hotels, and furnished apartment-houses, but drew a blank at all. Then I tried the house agents.

When I had nearly exhausted these I came across a smart young agent who seemed to take a strange fancy to my photograph, as though he saw something in it that puzzled him. I sat in front of him as he examined it until I believe he must have caught my anxiety and enthusiasm, for suddenly he exclaimed: "No, it cannot be! Yes, surely it is!" Then again: "No—impossible; he is a clergyman!"

After some persuasion he told me that a fortnight before, a young clergyman, clean-shaven and in orthodox dress, had rented a furnished house from him for himself and wife. He did not think it possible that this could be the man, but there was something about the eyes and expression of the photograph that put him in mind of him, although my photograph was that of a man with a moustache, and, of course, not a clergyman. Besides, he added, this clergyman had taken the house for three months, had paid the rent in advance, and had opened a fairly large account with a local banker recommended by him.

I determined to see the clergyman. I paid him a visit on the following morning at the furnished house, in the interests of a local charity, and to my delight had no difficulty in recognising the clean-shaven gentleman, who received me in faultless clerical attire, as the man I had so patiently hunted. I taxed him at once with being the man I wanted, and although he stoutly denied it and declared that he was a clergyman, the lady who joined us burst into tears, but said

nothing. I arrested him and searched his effects and his rooms. I found his cheque-book and pass-book, a quantity of new jewellery, and some two thousand francs in notes. Fortunately, I made a further and more exhaustive search, and between the leaves of a volume in a set of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* I found two receipts for registered letters, addressed to my prisoner by himself, as "The Rev. Mr. —," one to the General Post Office, Barnstaple, and the other to the General Post Office, Exeter, both "until called for."

I enquired by telegram and found that these two letters still awaited the application of "The Rev. Mr. —" and could not, without considerable trouble and delay, be obtained by anyone else. I left Ilfracombe the next day, with my prisoner, by the 10.20 a.m. express for London and took through tickets. I broke the journey at Barnstaple and at Exeter, took him to the post office at each place, saw him apply for and receive the registered letters, and reached London by the same train. Quick work, was it not?

There are two stations at Barnstaple, at each of which the train stopped, and the post office was midway between them. The police there had a motor-car awaiting me at the first station, and I caught the train with it at the second station. At Exeter we had to await the Plymouth section of the express. The two registered letters contained the remainder of the money not accounted for, less some £60, an amount that scarcely compensated the prisoner for the term of penal servitude he received.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE ROBBERY OF THE NELSON RELICS

VISCOUNT HORATIO NELSON, the greatest admiral that the world has known, was, as most people will remember, killed in action at the Battle of Trafalgar on the 21st of October, 1805. Nearly one hundred years later, what were known as "The Nelson Relics" were stolen by burglary from the Painted Hall at Greenwich Hospital, where they were exhibited for the benefit of the nation, in memory of that gallant seaman who did so much to build up the Empire and to establish the supremacy of its Navy.

The relics consisted of some twenty articles, including the watch and seal that Nelson was in the habit of wearing. Had anyone stolen the *Victory* itself, on which he died, the nation could hardly have received a greater shock than it did when his medals and orders, and the sword-hilt presented to him by his captains in commemoration of the Battle of the Nile, were stolen from the Greenwich Hospital.

I had the good fortune to recover the watch and seal, but the other relics stolen have not yet been recovered. I suppose that as "old gold" they are not worth more than £200 (the amount of the reward offered for their recovery), but to the nation they are priceless, because of their association with that gallant Englishman whose last words were, "Thank God, I have done my duty."

Those who were responsible for their safety, and

who are now responsible for their recovery, offered the reward of £200 for the conviction of the thief and the recovery of the relics. The thief has been convicted, but the reward remains unappropriated, for his conviction and the recovery of the watch and seal were brought about entirely by the police, whose office precludes them from participating in such a reward. It is still open to some person to earn the gratitude of the nation and this reward by giving the information that is required.

In my recapitulation of the circumstances of this robbery, and the arrest of the thief years after, I give away no secret except the one at the end of the chapter, and that concerns myself only. The facts were put fully before the public by the Press when the arrest was made and during the subsequent trial.

The stolen articles were kept in two large glass cases in the Painted Hall at the Greenwich Hospital. They were safe at four o'clock one Saturday afternoon, when the hall was, as usual, closed to the public, but when it was opened again at two o'clock the next afternoon they had been stolen.

It was at first thought that the thief had concealed himself on the premises, and had broken out, but it proved that he had entered and left by a window, which he reached from the roof of a lower building, to which he gained access from the grounds. More than three years passed, and, notwithstanding the patient and persistent efforts of the police, backed by the offer of reward, not the slightest clue was obtained of the thief or the whereabouts of the stolen relics.

Then we received a mysterious letter written from

Australia by some person who claimed to have bought Nelson's watch and seal from the thief, and to be able to give information respecting the other property stolen. The writer asked a large sum for the restoration of the watch and seal, and he gave such an exact description of them, illustrated by a sketch, that it appeared that he must have taken these from the originals, or obtained them from some one well acquainted with them.

A discreet communication was sent, under my direction, to the accommodation name and address that he gave in Australia, and at the same time the police there were furnished with particulars. Nothing, however, came of this, for the writer of the letter did not claim our communication.

Some months later a man presented himself at the Yard, asked for information as to the conditions of the payment of the reward offered for the restoration of the Nelson relics, and was referred to me. I interviewed him. His conduct was mysterious, and the more curious I became as to the object of his visit, the more anxious did he appear to cut short the interview and to leave the office.

He wrote his name and address for me, and when I compared his writing with that of the mysterious letter from Australia I saw that they were undoubtedly by the same hand, and I became the more anxious not to part company with him.

I suppose that never has there been a more striking testimony to the value of the "Finger-Print System" of identification than was furnished at this interview. While I talked to my visitor, without his being aware

of it, I got the impressions of his finger-prints ; these were developed, his antecedents were traced from them, and, unknown to him, his photograph and criminal record were placed in front of me, showing that he had been convicted of various offences, including burglary.

When I told him that I intended to detain him on suspicion of being concerned in stealing the relics in December 1900, he at once said that he went to Australia in 1899 and could prove that he had only just returned. This statement strengthened my suspicion against him, for his record proved that he was released from prison in London in 1900, not many days before the relics were stolen.

He was detained, and although I had reason to suspect his connection with the burglary I had as yet no tangible evidence to place before a magistrate to support a charge.

It was Saturday afternoon, and I had until Monday morning to search for the evidence that I hoped and expected to find. He gave a correct address where he had taken lodgings on landing from Australia the day before. His Gladstone bag and trunk were searched there, but nothing whatever was found in them to connect him with the charge.

He had been traced from the ship at the docks to Fenchurch Street, where he took train for the place at which he took lodgings. At the docks and at Fenchurch Street Station we were assured that he landed with a trunk and two Gladstone bags ; we had only found a trunk and one bag. Where, then, was the other bag ? I felt that he had deposited this in

some safe place, and that if I could trace it I should find in it the evidence that I lacked.

All day Sunday I spent in patient enquiry at railway stations, at parcels offices, at cloakrooms, and at other places where luggage might have been deposited, between Fenchurch Street and the lodging he had taken. Late on Sunday night I found the bag deposited in the cloakroom of a small local railway station. I searched it hurriedly, but found nothing to interest me, so I left it there in disgust and went home.

As I sat over my supper at midnight I told my wife of my disappointment, that "after searching all day for this bag, when I had found it, all it contained was some old clothes and a concertina." She said to me, "Did you look inside the concertina?" I dropped my knife and fork as I said, "No, what an ass I am!" This is the secret referred to above.

I could not sleep that night for thinking of that concertina, and, as soon as I could, the next day, I hurried back to that railway station and got the station-master to produce the bag once more. We took out the concertina, he found a screw-driver, and we unscrewed one end of it. There, snugly deposited in the woodwork was Nelson's watch, while in the other end we found the seal. The finding of this watch and seal got the prisoner seven years.

Some people say that the other relics have gone into the melting-pot, but I do not believe it. I believe that the man who stole them had a market for them, maybe in England, but more likely in America. It is just possible that they are in the hands of some



collector of antiques, who knows nothing of their value to the nation or of their true character. If so, I sincerely hope that chance may put this chapter into his hands.

I have good reason to believe that information leading to the recovery of the Nelson relics would be richly rewarded by the authorities at the Admiralty, who are keenly anxious to recover possessions which they regard as priceless on account of their supreme naval and historical interest.

## CHAPTER XVII

LORD HORATIO WILLIN, ALIAS MISS LILY FAIR

WHILE there are men of the lower criminal class—burglars, shop thieves, pickpockets and coiners—who are born criminals and remain criminals, there are many who are only criminals because they cannot live honestly.

These are usually born in criminal surroundings, and so familiarised with crime from the cradle (a figure of speech, for most of them have no cradle), that they have no moral dislike to crime, as such, and are not deterred from a criminal life by any sense of right or wrong.

Such men, after having served terms of imprisonment, are deterred by the wholesome effect of this punishment, and the probability of detection, from living by crime when they can live without it. With them imprisonment has attained its primary object. They are not reformed, but they are sufficiently punished by their loss of liberty to live honestly if they can.

There are men—fortunately, for society, not many—who choose criminal pursuits as a profession, calculating their risk and their profit. These men could make a good living in any legitimate business, and the only way to deter them from crime is to increase the risk so as to make it entirely disproportionate to the profit. They deserve no leniency, and crime is no disease in their case.

The man whose career I shall now relate was a criminal always, an habitual criminal in every sense of the word, one whom no amount of imprisonment would deter from crime, and yet he belonged to neither

of the classes I have described. He was a type of a class of criminal that takes to crime from a weakness of moral character, from conceit, love of notoriety, or some other psychological abnormality. If there is a class of criminal that should be treated as insane, and permanently deprived of liberty, this is the one.

Horatio Willin had the advantage of being born of highly respectable parents in highly respectable surroundings in an ancient cathedral town in the north of England. It was one of those places where, no matter what part of the town you lived in, you could not escape the influence of the Church any more than you could the chimes of the ancient minster.

He was a smart, good-looking youngster, with a fresh round face and thick, wavy black hair; he was quick and intelligent, with an ingratiating manner that made him a general favourite. He passed with credit through all the standards in the Church school that he entered as an infant, and left at the age of fourteen to take a situation as an errand boy.

To quote the words of the police officer who gave his character when he came into my hands some years later: "He soon showed strong criminal tendencies, accompanied by great conceit and an exaggerated idea of his own cleverness." At the age of sixteen he threw off parental control and struck out a line of business for himself in the form of a debt-collecting agency. It was not an ordinary business, for he named it: "The World's Rent and Debt Collecting Company," claimed to have branches all over England (which was not true), and called himself "Lord Horatio Willin."

He conducted this business by advertisement and

correspondence, and had attractive note-paper and circulars printed. He did well at this—collecting debts and sticking to the money. Then he advertised a pen which, when dipped in water, wrote ink. He sold a great number at one shilling and three-halfpence each—they cost him only three-halfpence—and he boasted that he cleared one hundred and fifty pounds at this.

Cycling was then all the rage, and, as cycles improved, road records were being beaten every day, so he advertised a valuable prize to be awarded to anyone who would beat the record from the city in which he had established himself to a watering-place fifty miles away. He collected a substantial sum in entrance fees and then claimed to have won the prize himself.

He started from the city on his cycle, took train two-thirds of the distance, arrived at the watering-place covered with dust, and fell fainting into the arms of an admiring crowd.

He wrote a brilliant account of this achievement in the cycling columns of the papers, and received invitations from all parts of the country to exhibit his cycling powers. His career was cut short by arrest for one of his frauds, and he received his first sentence, one of three months' imprisonment, when he was only sixteen years of age.

He served this sentence and then travelled in England. I heard of him afterwards in many towns, and although he swindled everywhere, he only did one swindle in each place and got safely away.

At the age of eighteen he decided to give London a turn, so he applied for a situation as manservant to a lady in Kensington, wrote himself a splendid character

as a J.P. of Liverpool, and got the place. He made a satisfactory manservant, and might have lived honestly in this situation had the warp in his character allowed him to do so.

I suppose there never was a time when there were not a great many poor people anxious for work and just able to raise a shilling or two to get it. This idea struck Horatio Willin, who, by the by, had changed his name, and he saw his way to a new swindle. He did nothing without advertisement, and always worked in that elaborate manner that characterised his first venture as "Lord Horatio Willin."

He selected a suitable address at a letter bureau in the West End, and made arrangements for letters to be received there at five shillings per week, for a "Miss Lily Fair," whose address he gave, and whose secretary he said he was. Then he advertised in several London papers in this form :

"Wanted, people who can write. Easy home work. Sixteen shillings weekly " Or, " Five plain writers wanted to address envelopes at home ; three shillings and sixpence per 1,000. Send stamped envelopes to Miss Lily Fair, . . ." (giving the address of the letter bureau).

Anticipating numerous applications, he had a circular letter printed, which was so ingenious that I venture to reproduce it :

" Established 1886, — Street, London, W.

" I am in receipt of your letter in answer to my advertisement, and beg to say that I have decided to offer you one of the vacancies.

“ Before I send you the material to start work with I am compelled to ask you for a small deposit to protect myself from persons who apply out of idle curiosity and do not want to work for honest people.

“ The materials necessary are four shillings in value, for which I require a deposit of two shillings, which amount I promise to return, with wages due, on receipt of your first week's work. On receipt of postal order value two shillings, with fourpence-halfpenny in stamps for postage, the materials, value four shillings, will be sent with full instructions to commence work at once.”

Now, I saw these advertisements, and, being able to write, answered them, received the circular letter, sent my postal order for two shillings and fourpence-halfpenny stamps, and waited at the letter bureau to see “ Miss Lily Fair ” receive the communication.

I replied to “ Miss Lily Fair's ” advertisement for home workers because I suspected a fraud, and when I received the circular letter appointing me, and asking me for two shillings and fourpence-halfpenny for material and postage, my suspicion was intensified.

The letter bureau, to which all communications to “ Miss Lily Fair ” were to be sent, was in a busy street near Piccadilly Circus, and a large business was done in the matter of its use as an accommodation address for letters. I had made it my purpose to know the proprietor, and I found him glad to assist me, as a police officer, as far as he could in justice to his business and his customers.

I saw him as to the bona fides of the “ Miss Lily

Fair " letters. He told me that the enormous number that came to hand had surprised him, and for this reason he had looked up in the *Court Directory* the address given him as that of " Miss Fair," by the smart young man who had called for the letters and had arranged the business as her " secretary."

I at once paid a tactful visit to this lady, and was not surprised to find that she had no secretary, and knew nothing whatever of the letters addressed in her name to the bureau.

The " secretary " had received some two thousand letters, which were probably only the first answers to his advertisements, but he had received about three hundred that morning, many of which, no doubt, contained postal orders and stamps. Some two hundred more had arrived since, and awaited his application. Would he call for these, or would he be satisfied with the amount already obtained? I waited anxiously to see.

About five o'clock in the afternoon a District Messenger boy entered, and said : " Letters for Miss Lily Fair, please." He had been sent by the manager of the Piccadilly office and was to take the letters there.

I made a sign to the proprietor of the bureau, he gave the boy the bundle of letters, and I followed him with them under his arm to his Piccadilly office. There I saw the manager receive them and place them on a desk, where I could keep my eye on them from the street.

It was very fortunate that I had allowed the boy to take the letters and had followed him discreetly, for the " secretary " had evidently watched the messenger to and from the bureau. I saw a smart young man on

the other side of the road, and as soon as the letters were deposited he crossed to the office and claimed them. It was thus that, for the first time, I saw "Horatio Willin," alias "Lord Horatio Willin," and "Miss Lily Fair."

As I followed him from the office after he had received the letters I felt mildly elated, for I knew that I had the material for a clear case of fraud of a particularly bad character in my hands, entirely off my own bat, for as yet no one else had realised that a fraud was being committed.

He walked to the Circus, then down the Haymarket into Trafalgar Square. Here he broke the bundle of letters and filled his coat pockets and his jacket pockets with them. He opened one or two and took out postal orders, as though to sample the bulk, and then got on an omnibus going west.

I had made up my mind to arrest him, but if I had done so at once I might never have found his address and the other postal orders, or his confederates if he had any. Therefore I bided my time and followed him. He alighted near High Street, Kensington, and as he was about to enter a superior-class house near there, I arrested him.

At first he said that he had no letters or postal orders; then he said that he had collected them for his firm. "What firm?" I asked, and as I found that he was not inclined to tell me I held him and rang the bell of the house he was about to enter. A maid-servant answered the door and looked very frightened as I asked her if she knew the young man I held, and she blurted out: "Yes, sir; why, it's Mr. Williams, our butler."

I saw the lady of the house, still holding my prisoner,



and I turned out some two hundred letters and postal orders from his pockets in front of her. She knew nothing of these, and could only say that he had been with her as butler for two or three weeks, was a satisfactory servant, and had come to her with a good character from a J.P. of Liverpool (a character that, as I have said, he wrote himself).

He had nothing more to say, so I took him to the police-station and detained him while I searched his room. There I found some thousand letters of application for home work, all addressed "Miss Lily Fair," as well as some three hundred, each containing a postal order and stamps value two shillings and fourpence-halfpenny.

The man was remanded, the Treasury took up the prosecution, some of the poor people defrauded attended the trial as witnesses, and he was convicted and sentenced to eighteen months' hard labour, while I had the somewhat unique experience of receiving a commendation by the magistrate at the police court, by the judge and jury at the sessions, and by the counsel who defended the prisoner there.

The five hundred poor people who had parted with their two shillings and fourpence-halfpenny each to obtain work had the money refunded to them by the police. It was not much, but in some cases it was their last penny.

Soon after this enterprising young man had been released after serving this sentence, my attention was called to the following letter in a newspaper :

"SIR,—During the last few days I have received so many enquiries as to what class of articles I want

for the Yorkshiremen under General French that I cannot answer all by post, therefore, I take the liberty of answering the questions here.

“Of cigarettes I want, if possible, one hundred thousand, as General French says there are none left. Cigarettes in tin boxes are the most convenient.

“Underwear may be of any colour as long as it is made of wool or a mixture of wool and cotton. Shirts must be of grey flannel. I want one thousand socks ; they must be of wool, any colour. I want one thousand handkerchiefs, which must not be red ; all must be white. Tobacco is preferred in tins, not loose.

“I send the next bale of things off not later than the 22nd, therefore I ask those who will help me to let me have same not later than the 20th February. . . Anyone sending me money instead of goods, the same will be duly expended on comforts.”

This letter was signed “Duckworth-Wood,” a compound name, with some half-dozen high-sounding Christian names, and it was dated from a good address at a fashionable South Coast watering-place.

The author of the “Miss Lily Fair” advertisements was the writer of this letter, and although he did not say that the money sent would be spent on comforts for himself, he intended to apply it in this way. At least, so thought the judge, who sentenced him to another term of eighteen months for frauds on the public, who sent him money and goods for the troops in South Africa.

He obtained money, cutlery, razors, underclothing,

pipes, pocket handkerchiefs, a portmanteau, cigarettes, and other articles, and again he was not in actual want, for he had managed to secure a good situation as a butler to a gentleman, who had a country seat, as well as a house at the seaside, and he used both these addresses for this new fraud.

He served this sentence, and came up again with fraudulent schemes more ambitious in their nature than ever. He started a theatrical syndicate, and took the name of one of our most famous and popular theatrical managers. He appointed a "duke" as his "sleeping partner," much to that gentleman's disgust when he heard of it.

He did not stop at the syndicate either ; he promoted a theatrical company to perform a musical comedy, which he claimed to have composed, and he engaged artists to perform it in the pier theatre at a popular seaside resort. "Somebody's Cigarettes" added to his notoriety by distributing his photographs in their packets as a "theatrical star."

When the members of the musical comedy company turned up at the pier for rehearsal the fraud was discovered, and one of them, who had parted with one hundred and fifty pounds to secure himself a post as the promoter's secretary, charged him with fraud. This charge, with the character I gave him, got him five years.

He has been out from this sentence some time. I say "been out," for circumstances have caused me to lose sight of him. I shall be greatly surprised if he has not gone back to prison for some other ambitious and extraordinary fraud.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE YOUNG MAN WITH "PROSPECTS"

BEFORE the Act was passed that required all money-lenders to register in their own names, frauds by persons who claimed to trade as financial agents or bill-brokers were pretty frequent, but cases were rare in which one of these sharks was himself the victim of a fraud.

The instance that I refer to created some little interest at the time, not only because of its cleverness and audacity, but because the gentleman defrauded had made himself somewhat prominent in the Law Courts as a man who always insisted on his "pound of flesh," and generally got it.

There is no doubt that the two who planned and carried out this swindle were clever; they were also English, and were not habitual criminals, so it is not to be wondered at that they had more sympathy than their victim, who was a Jew from Poland. But the English law, impartial always, did him justice, and they received the punishment they deserved.

The pair of offenders were a good combination for such a fraud, and they carried it out deliberately, as though they thought their victim fair game. No doubt they knew something of him and his methods, and they believed that he would never go to the extreme of setting the criminal law in motion against them.

Harold Fitzhubert, as he called himself, was a young man of good birth and education. When much

younger he had lost his character and his money, so that at the time of which I write he had long been an adventurer and an outcast from society:

He knew the methods of such moneylenders as he proposed to deal with quite well, for in the days when he had "good prospects" they had helped to ruin him. Now that he had no money and no character to lose, he felt no shame in turning his experience to account in an attempt to get some of his own back.

The woman who assisted him was much older than he, and not of his class. From a criminal point of view she bore a better character, for she was not "known to the police." No doubt she was attracted to him by his comparative youth and evident good breeding.

He had been barred from society for some years, and, although the scandal which culminated in his arrest and imprisonment had not been forgotten, the years that had passed enabled him to escape recognition amongst those with whom he now dealt in this fraud.

Remembering his early experiences, he did not seek his intended victim directly, but schemed to draw his attention to himself as a likely client.

There were several men to be found frequenting the fashionable restaurants and places of amusement in the West End who lived by looking out for gentlemen "with prospects" likely to want a few hundreds in advance, in order to introduce them to moneylenders and draw commission.

Fitzhubert knew this, and knew how to draw them too. He set to work to dangle himself in front of

was the son of a general in India who governed an important province there.

He soon succeeded in interesting one of these touts, who proposed business to him by suggesting the advance of a few hundreds, should it be necessary or desired. The proposal was at first declined. The young man said that the governor made him a liberal allowance, and he had no need to anticipate the fortune that he knew would be his.

Then Fitzhubert spoke of a reversionary interest in freehold houses in London, settled on him by an old aunt, as well as a share in a fortune of sixty thousand pounds belonging to his old uncle, and finally consented, with no apparent anxiety, that the tout should arrange a loan of a few hundreds for himself on the security of his reversionary interest in the house property and his own bills of exchange. He had been having a lively time of it in London, and said that he desired to prolong his stay without drawing further on the governor in India.

I have no doubt that the tout and his principal consulted the *Army List* and *Whitaker*, and found that there was, in fact, a general who was Governor or Lieutenant-Governor in India of the same name as their client. Of course the client had thought this all out before he started his campaign.

He had no rich aunt in London, however, and this was where his female accomplice came in. She was friendly with an old lady who really owned considerable house property, but who was so ignorant that she could not read, although she could sign her name.

to get her daughter into a certain school, and that the only thing necessary was her support as a property owner, the woman obtained the old lady's signature to certain documents that she did not read, but which, in reality, assigned the interest in her house property to Fitzhubert.

This document would probably have been no use to anyone in any claim for the ownership of the houses, but it proved sufficient, drawn in legal form as it was, to completely deceive the moneylender.

The houses referred to were known to be freehold and worth some few thousands, so the dupe accepted a deed giving him a charge on the reversionary interest in this property and Fitzhubert's own bills of exchange for two thousand pounds and advanced him about nine hundred pounds in cash.

As the loan was only for a month or two, the interest on the money worked out at something more than two thousand pounds per cent. per annum, and, in order to show greater value in exchange for the security, the interest in a small business, and some wine and jewellery, were, as a matter of form only, made over to the borrower.

I rather think that when the moneylender reflected he thought that his client had accepted his terms too easily, especially as he showed no anxiety as to the business, the wine, and the jewellery. He became uneasy, and went himself to see the old aunt who owned the house property. His horror and rage when he discovered that she was not Fitzhubert's aunt, did not even know his name, and entirely repudiated his interest in her property, may well be imagined.

The loss of nine hundred golden sovereigns at one time ! He swore to have his revenge. He went to a solicitor, who obtained a warrant for the arrest of the pair, and it was handed over to me for execution.

When the old lady received the visit from the excitable Jew she was so frightened that she went to her friend who had asked her to sign the documents for an explanation, and thus warned the two swindlers that their fraud was discovered earlier than they had anticipated.

When I received the warrant I found that they had fled the day before. I traced them to Waterloo Railway Station, and there found that two persons answering their description had booked to Romsey, in Hampshire. That they should go to Romsey seemed strange, and, though by no means sure that I was on the right track, I followed the clue.

At Romsey station I found that the two had taken a fly to the principal hotel, arriving late in the evening of the previous day. They had stayed there the night, and left by hired motor-car for Southampton shortly before I had arrived. I waited the return of this car with some anxiety, and then found that their luggage had been taken on the London and South-Western Railway Company's boat, due to leave for Havre at midnight.

I had less than an hour to catch them, but, on promising the chauffeur a substantial tip, he rushed me through the quiet Hampshire roads, along the tram-lines from the suburbs, through the town of Southampton, and down to the Docks at ten minutes to midnight.



I found the pair comfortably settled on deck, hustled them off with their luggage just in time, and lodged them safely at the local police-station for the night. They were tried at the Old Bailey, convicted, and sentenced.

What they did with the bulk of the money I never discovered, for comparatively little was traced to them.

## CHAPTER XIX

### "MR. SMITH"—A PRINCE OF SWINDLERS

IN relating the history of this Prince of Swindlers I will call him plain "Mr. Smith." This is the simplest way out of a difficulty ; I might be treading on dangerous ground by christening him otherwise, for there must be few distinguished names that he did not assume at one time or another during his career in more than two continents. He figured many times as colonel, captain, and judge, and certainly once as an attaché to the American Embassy.

He was equally at home in London, in Paris, in New York, in San Francisco, and in the chief cities of Canada, India, China, and Australia ; he was equally successful as a forger, cardsharp, thief, swindler of tradespeople, and—in his later years—women.

He was the son of a wealthy English business man, and his father sent him to a public school. He was favoured with robust health, fine physique, and an engaging manner. He commenced life as a bank-clerk in the north of England, afterwards securing an appointment at the Bank of England.

Here his smartness and expert grip of banking marked him out for selection to represent the bank in a house in China. It is said that before he left to take up this new post he had developed a strong passion for gambling. This proved his ruin, for in Hong-kong he gave way to reckless speculation, his

reputation suffered damage, and finally he was obliged to resign his appointment.

He left China for New York, and there commenced his criminal career. He joined a smart set of gamblers, and by reason of his banking knowledge proved useful to them in a great forgery scheme. At their instigation he actually accepted work with a firm of engravers, his fellow-conspirators paying his expenses while he perfected himself in the art of engraving.

His first great adventure was made before I had any idea that I should take a special interest in him or any other criminal. The coup in question was a forgery of U.S. five-dollar bills. Hundreds of thousands of them were prepared from his engraving and distributed throughout the States. His share in the proceeds was said to reach £7,000.

Flushed with success, he returned to England, where he appears to have used his skill in making his own Bank of England notes. He even succeeded in reproducing the water-mark.

Then he booked a first-class passage back to America. There, when he was about thirty-five years old, he reached the zenith of his success. During the two years it lasted he had the time of his life. He even made history in America, where startling surprises and big events are supposed to be the rule.

He prepared a splendid scheme to flood Europe and America with forged circular notes. These forgeries, and the corresponding letters of credit, were probably his masterpieces in the way of engraving.

When all was ready, various journeys in both continents were mapped out, and undertaken by our

forger and some five of his confederates. According to report they netted amongst them £250,000 sterling.

His own travels were confined to America, and for the purposes of his tour he elevated himself to the peerage, calling himself Lord —, a name associated with a famous banking-house.

The new nobleman is said to have gone through a ceremony of marriage with a famous American beauty, and, although he surrounded himself with the luxuries befitting his apparent rank, the two travelled incognito as "Mr. and Mrs. Smith," first on a magnificently appointed yacht and then in a special saloon car over the railways of the Western States and Canada.

"Her ladyship" was a huge success, although she disliked travelling as plain "Mrs.," and took good care to make it generally known that his lordship merely assumed this name to secure greater privacy.

At San Francisco they were officially fêted by the authorities. A public dinner was held in their honour, incognito notwithstanding, and in reply to the toast of "The British Empire," coupled with the names of its illustrious representatives, "Mr. and Mrs. Smith," our forger made the speech of the evening—a speech regarded by all who heard or read it as a perfect specimen of the good taste and diplomacy which distinguish the British aristocracy.

He touched delicately upon the sterling good qualities of the American citizen, and intimated that the country he represented was proud of the strain of English stock which ran through that country. He modestly hinted that he intended to use his wealth and influence to unite in closer commercial relations

the two countries—and he got away with about £20,000 of the good money of his entertainers in exchange for his forgeries.

He retired in safety, it is true, but the city never forgot that he made it the butt of the whole country, and when he visited it again some years later, although he had altered his appearance, and cultivated an accent which sounded like the local product, he was recognised and arrested on one or more of the numerous charges against him.

While he awaited trial, the State in which he was arrested adopted a new Constitution, and special measures had to be taken to make its new laws apply to his old crimes. It took two years to arrange this, and large sums of money were expended for and against him. Ultimately justice prevailed (I think the money on his side ran short), and he received a sentence of eight years' imprisonment.

He served about three years—during this time he escaped and was recaptured—and was then released on medical grounds.

He now travelled in Australia, India, and Europe, cardsharping and swindling wherever he went. He appears to have escaped arrest for some nine years. Then he turned up in London, where he was sent to penal servitude for three and a half years for various ingenious frauds to which he pleaded guilty.

It was on his release from this sentence in 1897, when he was well on the wrong side of fifty, that I had my first personal encounter with him.

This jolly and philosophical rogue and cosmopolitan swindler, who was, according to the occasion, colonel,

judge, or nobleman, Englishman, American, or Australian, was released from his term of penal servitude just at the time when visitors from America and the Continent were crowding into London for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

He came out fit and well, with three years' reserve of criminal energy stored up, and at once began to make the most of the tempting opportunities he found confronting him.

At Dartmoor and Portland he was a model prisoner, and never lost a mark for bad conduct. His cheery disposition, in fact, made him popular with the warders, who often have sullen brutes to deal with. Consequently he left the prison with what is known as a "full gratuity"—only two or three pounds, it is true, but sufficient to enable him to get to work on his schemes at once.

From the prison gates he went straight to one of the largest and most fashionable hotels in London, a place practically cornered by American visitors. Here he represented himself as the cousin of a gentleman prominent in American diplomatic circles, whose name was well-known in London. He explained that he was a colonel in the United States Army and attached to the American Embassy. Speaking with a strong American accent and in the easy, confident manner of one who was accustomed to the attention that unlimited money commands, he engaged an expensive suite of rooms for a party of Americans expected in London immediately. He had the hotel omnibus sent off to meet the boat-train at Euston.

After giving detailed instructions regarding the

suite of rooms, he strolled out of the hotel with an expensive cigar between his teeth, and the printed hotel vouchers bearing the numbers of the rooms, with the key of one of them attached, in his pocket. He never returned. The omnibus met the train, but the visitors did not arrive. The rooms were re-let, and those who had attended to the colonel forgot all about him.

This was his first move in a scheme which he had mapped out on the eve of his release. It was important that, to commence with, he should get hold of these hotel vouchers and the key with the hotel label attached to it. His next move concerned a well-known banking establishment with a small branch at St. John's Wood. He took a cab from the hotel door to this branch, ordered the cab to wait, entered, and asked for the manager. That gentleman was at lunch, but the colonel insisted on his being sent for.

I wish I could do justice to him in my description of the manner in which he played and landed this manager. It was worthy of the artist who had hoaxed a whole city in the States. It was this manager's misfortune to be the victim selected. Any other manager would probably have done as he did, even against his judgment, under the magnetic influence of this remarkable criminal. Remember that he had the education of a gentleman, he was of prosperous appearance, he knew much about men and countries, he had a strong American accent, about £2 in his pocket, with the hotel key and vouchers, and that the manager was anxious to do business at the new branch.

When the manager arrived the colonel opened the

attack on him by asking that the porter might be sent to pay his cab-fare, taking care to name the hotel from which he had driven, and to produce one of his two sovereigns. He explained that he knew nothing about cab-fares in London. He then introduced himself as Colonel —, "well known at the Embassy here," and straightway took the manager, as a man of the world, into his confidence.

He told him that he had come over with a large party, and was staying at the Hotel — (here the key and the vouchers came in quite casually). They were "this side" to attend the Jubilee celebrations, and—well, money was no object to him, and he meant to have a good time. Then, *sotto voce*, he said that he did not want to let everyone know what he was doing. The fact was he had occasion to run a small place at St. John's Wood, and for that reason he wished to open a private account in the neighbourhood by transferring a thousand or so from his account at their head office.

Here he remembered that he had called the manager from his lunch, and had not lunched himself; so he insisted, in order to save time, that the manager should accompany him to some decent place in the neighbourhood for lunch. They went to an hotel near by and had lunch together. The colonel had less than £2 in his pocket, but he insisted on ordering a bottle of "1884 Heidsieck." He would drink no other vintage. During lunch he talked in a tactful style of his travels in China and India, his experiences in American society circles, and his friendship with the American Ambassador.



They returned to the bank, and in the manager's room he asked permission to use the telephone. He called for a number at random, and the following conversation followed for the benefit of the manager : "Are you Brown, Jones & Co. ? . . . Have you paid that 10,000 dollars into my credit at Pater's Bank ? I'm Colonel —— . . . Don't know anything about it ? Nonsense ! Is Mr. Brown in the office ? . . . Put me through to him at once." (Here the colonel grew red and angry.) . . . "Ah, Brown, is that you ? I'm Colonel —— . How about that 10,000 dollars paid in yesterday ? . . . Good ! Well, I want you to send over to the bank at once and arrange for 5,000 dollars to be transferred this afternoon to the branch here at St. John's Wood. I want it here this afternoon certain. . . . Good ! Has Vanderbilt arrived, by the by ? . . . To-morrow ? Don't forget. I've reserved that suite next to mine at the Hotel —— . Good-bye."

The colonel departed soon afterwards with a book of twenty-five cheques ; he used nearly all these during the next few days. He bought clothes and jewellery for himself and ladies. He dined ladies at fashionable restaurants, and had a really royal time.

On the Thursday before August Bank Holiday he made the acquaintance of a smart woman ; on the Friday he took her to a first-class dressmaking establishment and to a milliner's, and told her to choose all the hats and frocks she wanted, and arranged to have them sent to his hotel for her, to be paid for on delivery. He was told that this could not be done until Tuesday, but she made her selection with a free hand.

On Saturday he ran short of cash, so he telegraphed (apparently) from the woman's flat to a well-known agent's to send him supplies to the hotel. Later he showed her a telegram (written by himself) notifying him that he could not have a draft until Tuesday. Tuesday morning came, and he said to the woman : “ Come along. Let's go and see about the frocks and some money.” He left her in the dressmaker's ostensibly to go to the telephone, but he did not return. When she reached home again she found all her valuable jewellery had disappeared.

The colonel managed to live like this for about three weeks, until he was arrested on sight by a constable who was put on his track by a man who knew I wanted him. I found him as suave as ever. He actually boasted to me of the number of women he had duped during his three weeks of liberty. The public-school boy, the bank-clerk, the man who had netted a quarter of a million at one haul, had come down to this.

He got ten years' penal servitude, together with the unexpired term of his previous sentence. He is now over sixty years of age. I suppose that during half of his forty years of adult life he prospered. What of the other twenty years ? What of his destitute and friendless old age ? Is the game really worth the candle ?

## CHAPTER XX

### A TURF SWINDLE

CAPTAIN HERBERT GREENE was by no means green by nature. He simply lacked general experience of the world, especially of the London world, for he had been too keen a soldier all his life to gain much experience of anything outside military affairs. He was a man of fine physique, of few words, and of uncompromising manner; above all, he was a Scotsman. He was one of the last persons one would expect anyone to take a liberty with. He had served long in India, and had sold out or retired at a comparatively early age—I believe on medical grounds, probably sunstroke or liver, although he looked fit enough.

He settled in bachelor chambers in the West End, and looked round for some investment that would provide him with an occupation, to enable him to live on the two or three thousand pounds he had to his credit without wasting the capital. While waiting for something to turn up he went the pace a bit, especially as regards drink. He had no friends in London, and he got himself mixed up with acquaintances who, as he afterwards learned, were anything but desirable or creditable. He had nothing to do, and, as these gentlemen (smartly dressed men of the world) made a fuss of him, he got into the habit of meeting them, at "gin and bitter" time, at their haunts near Piccadilly Circus. He went with these

“jolly good fellows” to Covent Garden balls, to music-halls, to snug little dinner-parties, to race-meetings, and to other sporting events. He betted and lost, not considerably, it is true, but sufficiently to get the idea that the bookmakers’ business was a very easy and a very lucrative one, and this idea was fostered by his friends.

The flat-racing season was about to commence, and these friends persuaded him that this was the time to make a fortune pleasantly and easily by starting a business in the West End, on a large scale, as a Turf Commission Agent. They were confident that he, assisted by them, was the man to do it. In anticipation of securing their victim, one of these friends of the captain took an office in the West End as “F. L. and A. T. Buncombe, Turf Commission Agents,” and the others opened betting accounts at the office in various names, and sent numerous letters and telegrams making bets, with the result that very soon the books showed a large and profitable business.

At last Captain Greene was persuaded to buy this business, and he paid the representative of his friends £500 for it. This representative was kept on as a clerk at a substantial salary, while a sort of partnership was entered into between the captain and two others of the gang. I say “a sort of partnership” because I have never been able to understand what equivalent to the captain’s money the other parties to it put into the business. I suppose it was the brains and the business connection. Whatever it was, the victim was persuaded to value it at £2,000, in addition to £500 that he had already parted with, for he

placed £2,000 of his money into the partnership account.

Now the tide of fortune was at the flood for the captain's wily friends, and they did not neglect it. They set to work at once to get as much as they could of the £2,000 into their own hands. Each of the conspirators opened betting accounts with the office in false names, and from accommodation addresses, where their letters were received for them, and they sent numerous telegrams and letters backing likely horses for large sums. These telegrams and letters were received in the office by themselves, generally in the captain's absence. Those making bets that were against them were destroyed, while the winning bets were duly paid out of the partnership account. While this went on the wretched victim was so plied with drink that he became almost paralytic and had to place himself in the hands of a doctor.

Then he had a lucid interval, and unexpectedly turned up at the office, weak and shaky, it is true, but fairly clear of intellect. His two partners had taken advantage of his illness to attend a race-meeting that day, and he was able to note that there was only £500 left in the partnership account, and that a large number of telegrams, making bets for considerable amounts, were coming into the office from two Army officers living at an address in Jermyn Street.

Now, as I have said, the captain was in his element in military matters, so he looked up these two officers in the *Army List* and found that they were with their regiment abroad. This aroused his suspicion. He went to the address in Jermyn Street, and found that

it was a "letter bureau" only, and this confirmed his suspicion. He returned to the office, seized all the telegrams from the two officers, and, to his amazement, found one for every horse in every race that day. Then he acted with military promptness. He went to the bank, withdrew the £500 from the partnership account, and placed it in his private account.

Of course the telegrams he had seized were damning pieces of evidence of the fraud that had been practised upon him by the conspirators, and the first thing they did was to try to gain possession of them. They had the audacity to prepare a document on blue paper to represent a search warrant, and one of their number went to the captain's chambers with it, and, representing himself to be a detective-sergeant, searched for the telegrams there in the captain's absence. Fortunately, the captain had deposited them with his banker. The audacity of these gentlemen, when they found themselves foiled, did not end here, for they actually got a solicitor to prepare an information against the captain, accusing him of stealing £500 as a co-partner from their partnership account, and they actually succeeded in obtaining a warrant for his arrest.

The warrant was in due course handed to me for execution, the accused was arrested, and, after having been detained in the police-cells the whole night, was taken before a magistrate on the warrant. The conspirators had succeeded in deceiving the solicitor who acted for them, and through him the magistrate who had granted the warrant on their sworn information, but when the charge came up for hearing at the police court they did not appear.

After the officer who arrested the captain had been examined by the solicitor who appeared for him, the solicitor who acted for the prosecution withdrew the charge and the prisoner was liberated. He told the Court that the gang had obtained £2,000 from him, and that their reason for bringing the charge was to squeeze more money out of him. I suspected, however, that their real reason was to gain time, and, if possible, to use the police to get possession of the books and telegrams that they knew would convict them.

They did gain time, and, when I had gone into matters with the captain, and had obtained warrants for their arrest, they were not to be found. The man who had personated the detective-sergeant was apprehended at once. He had taken no other active part in the conspiracy, so he was merely dealt with for falsely representing himself to be a police officer. After a lapse of nearly two months, one of the principal members of the gang was arrested, tried at the Old Bailey, and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. The others were not traced, and, as we lost sight of the captain soon after, the matter dropped.

## CHAPTER XXI

### STEALING OR KLEPTOMANIA

THE vexed question of "stealing or kleptomania" invariably brings in its train that highly controversial topic of "One law for the rich and another for the poor." Whenever a case of shop-lifting occurs where the offender is a person of superior standing, the question is bound to arise as to whether justice metes out the same treatment as it would to one in poor circumstances. I do not complain of this critical attitude, indeed, within limits, I consider it all to the good that public opinion should be so easily stirred in this direction, but it often happens that the critics are at fault through not knowing the full facts of the case, and the strictures heaped upon magistrates and police are, consequently, not justified.

Comment is often made that, when a person of means is found to have committed thefts from shops, the defence nearly always takes the line that the act was that of one in the grip of an irresistible impulse to steal, which was, in itself, a manifestation of insanity. It is urged that, where it is proved that no necessity existed for the article, or articles stolen—such as would be the case if a man with starving children stole a loaf of bread—the act of stealing arises from causes beyond the control of the thief and is, therefore, not criminal. If this is proved the suggestion of course follows that the case should be treated on pathological and not criminal grounds.



I want to avoid entering upon controversial matters, for, as a police officer, it was my duty to administer the law as I found it, irrespective of persons, and not to allow my sympathies to be affected by specious reasonings. I can say, however, as a result of long experience, that I am convinced justice is more severe in dealing with the rich offender than with the poor one. This statement may be controverted, but I emphasise that public opinion is frequently based upon inadequate facts, and what may appear to be a magisterial partiality in favour of the rich is often exactly the opposite.

“My wife stole a shawl last week worth 2s. and was sent to prison for six weeks. She was ill and near her confinement, yet because Mrs. Blank is a lady and steals goods worth hundreds of pounds she gets off. Is this justice ? ”

These lines, signed “Labourer,” appeared in a London newspaper, and they referred to a prosecution, for which, as a police officer, I was responsible. The case created quite a sensation at the time, and was widely reported by the Press under startling headlines, here and on the other side in America.

It was in the height of the London season, some years before the war, a wonderful season with sunshine and warmth such as we rarely get now. Trade was at its best, and the West End tradesmen not only had the goods to sell, but found a galaxy of purchasers with money to buy. There were visitors from all parts of the world, especially from America. The

hotels were full to overflowing. In the day-time Regent Street, Bond Street, and Piccadilly were crowded with well-dressed people, in carriages and on foot, all apparently prosperous, happy, and excited in the pursuit of pleasure and in searching the fashionable shops for articles of jewellery or of dress to wear at functions here or to exploit on their return to their distant homes.

There were garden-parties at many of the magnificent houses in St. James's or in the neighbourhood of Park Lane; polo tournaments at Hurlingham and Ranelagh; the Trooping of the Colours on the Horse Guards Parade; the Derby and Ascot Races; regal functions at Buckingham Palace, and, to finish the day, dinner-parties and balls at noble mansions, the occupiers of which appeared to compete with one another in lavish expenditure and splendid entertainment, not troubled by the present rate of income tax or the servant difficulty of to-day.

The brilliancy of this London season with these numerous functions kept the police well employed. I had a full share of the work, for I was directly responsible for the prevention and detection of crime in the West End, and felt the responsibility. In addition to my routine work I attended many of the afternoon garden-parties and some of the balls, always as one of the guests and dressed accordingly. I visited the principal hotels and music-halls, and yet found time to mix with the crowd in the streets and in the larger shops, for wherever wealth is gathered criminals congregate, like birds of prey, and we knew, too, that our visitors were not all honest.

## ROGUES AND OTHERS

It was in one of the shops, a furrier's in Regent Street, that my attention was first called to the lady who proved to be the "Mrs. Blank" referred to by our "Labourer" correspondent. She had visited this shop, accompanied by a gentleman. The lady wanted to match a chinchilla skin which she brought with her, but, after she had examined a quantity of furs, they left without making a purchase, and then a sable tie that she was known to have handled was missed. Their accent indicated that they were Americans; they were of middle age, prosperous-looking, and were taken to be wealthy American visitors, a gentleman and his wife spending a summer holiday in Europe.

I did not attach much importance to this until I received similar reports from other fashionable shops in the same neighbourhood, all furriers, then I felt it necessary to take the matter seriously, and went thoroughly into it, thinking that I had a couple of expert thieves to deal with. In every case a lady, accompanied by a gentleman, was known to have handled valuable furs, one of which was missed after they had left, in each case without making a purchase. In every case the description given agreed. It was noted that the gentleman appeared to take little notice while the lady handled the furs; he only waited around; but he might have been acting as a cover while she committed the thefts, so I got a careful description of the two from assistants who attended to the lady, all of whom could identify both of them.

Then I detailed two young and capable members of my detective staff to accompany two of the shop

assistants, in pairs, to search for the parties amongst the fashionable shops in the West End. On the second day one pair succeeded in picking them up, and followed them to a hotel much favoured by wealthy Americans. We learned, by discreet enquiry at the hotel, that Mr. and Mrs. Blank occupied an expensive suite and were looked upon as wealthy American visitors. To make quite sure that the one assistant who had identified them was not mistaken, we took other assistants from different shops into the lounge at the hotel, and, as the parties came down to dinner the same evening, they were independently identified beyond any possibility of mistake, arrested, and brought to me at the police-station, where I caused them to be detained.

So far so good. But suppose Mr. and Mrs. Blank proved to be wealthy Americans of good character? I was responsible for their arrest and detention without warrant. The shopkeepers alleged to have been robbed had not given them into custody, and so took no responsibility. It appeared to me that, unless some of the stolen furs were actually traced to their possession, there was great risk that my action might not be justified; this is one of the risks a responsible police officer, anxious for the credit of his service, often has to take, trusting that the end will justify the means. The delay necessarily caused in applying for a warrant, or in reporting particulars to some higher authority in order to shelve responsibility, often resulted in the escape of the criminal and in failure to recover stolen property.

Mr. and Mrs. Blank gave me their keys, and,

without delaying a minute, I drove to their hotel and saw the manager, with whom I happened to be on friendly terms. Our interview somewhat strained that friendship, for he refused to allow me to examine the suite occupied by the parties. He did not know them, but, like others, believed them to be wealthy American visitors. I insisted on going up to their suite, and finally he allowed me to do so, under protest and on the distinct understanding that I took the entire responsibility.

The manager accompanied me to the suite, and, like me, was astonished to see the amount of luggage it contained—a number of large dress-baskets, cabin-trunks, dressing-cases, suit-cases, hat-boxes, etc., enough to fill a small pantechicon ; many bore labels from different Continental cities, showing that the owners had been on a tour of Europe. Most of them were locked and strapped as though they had not been recently used. I selected one that appeared to me to be a lady's trunk in use, and I unlocked it. It so happened that this trunk contained all the evidence I sought, and much more than I expected, for the first piece of evidence I came across was a parcel wrapped in several serviettes, marked with the name of the hotel, and containing two silver-plated toast-racks, with the name of the hotel engraved on them. The manager saw me find these, and his astonishment was only exceeded by his apologies for his opposition to the search and his anxiety to atone for it. He also saw in the same trunk a large collection of furs, similar to those stolen from the various shops. I locked the trunk with the furs and the toast-racks inside, and,

as soon as I could commandeer a van, I removed all the luggage to my office.

My day's work was not yet finished, for I had kept in touch with the shopkeepers who had lost furs and wished to prosecute, and I sent for them; towards midnight they came to my office, and, from amongst the furs in the trunk I had opened at the hotel, they identified the articles they had missed after Mrs. Blank had handled them when her husband was present in their shop. Then each made a formal charge against the two prisoners, which was entered on the official charge-sheet, and they signed it. Early the next morning the manager of the hotel signed a similar charge in regard to the two toast-racks, which he valued at something like £3 each. Thus I had four separate charges of theft, with evidence practically complete, ready for the magistrate that morning.

The magistrate happened to be Sir Robert (Bobby) Newton, and, at my request, he took all the evidence available. I had witnesses present to complete three charges, all relating to furs; and they gave full and satisfactory evidence, identifying the prisoners and the articles stolen, found in their possession. The prisoners were represented by a solicitor who had an office next door to the court and was probably sent for, at their request, by the gaoler, but he had little to say except to press for bail, which the magistrate very definitely declined to grant; he remanded both in custody for a week and they were taken to Holloway Gaol in the prison van.

From my point of view everything had, so far, gone quite smoothly, and I had every reason to believe that

we had landed two expert American thieves and recovered an immense amount of stolen property, so I returned to my office, somewhat elated, to prepare a full report for headquarters. I had scarcely commenced it, however, when I received a very pressing summons to the Yard to see the Chief of the Department. I had never seen this gentleman more perturbed. I believe he thought highly of me as a young and energetic officer, but I soon saw that he had come to a very definite, although hasty, conclusion that my career was ended, and that I had endangered the reputation of his department in a manner that would make it the laughing-stock of America in that I had caused the arrest and detention of an American millionaire and his wife on a paltry charge of theft.

It appears that the United States Ambassador had made very strong representations to the Foreign Office, and the Foreign Office to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, under whose charge the police is, and he had asked the Commissioner of Police to set to work at once to right this supreme wrong to wealthy and influential subjects of a friendly power. I heard later—I suppose it was chaff—that a breach of diplomatic relations was threatened by the withdrawal of the Ambassador. It was even said, jocularly of course, that the United States Fleet was ordered to sail to blockade London.

In the short interview I had with my Chief, before he rushed me into the august presence of the Commissioner, I think I relieved his mind somewhat. Apparently the representations made to them, before I had had any chance of reporting the matter, did not

admit of the possibility of their being able to support my action ; but when I gave them full particulars they came to a different conclusion, decided to support me, and I finally found myself interviewing the Director of Public Prosecutions, who, considering the interests at stake and seeing that I appeared to have a strong case, decided to uphold my action by taking up the prosecution.

The treasure-trove we had seized comprised a large and valuable collection of rings, studs, bangles, brooches, pins, tortoise-shell combs and mirrors, small clocks and watches, nearly a score of valuable lace and ostrich-feather fans, some valuable china, quite a number of sable ties, boas, collarettes, and many other articles—all new, attractive to the eye, and nearly all for personal adornment. Most of these had obviously come from the Continent, many had trade marks or tickets on them, and this fact made it appear to me that these had been stolen, for what tradesman would sell such articles to a lady without removing these marks or tickets ? I had all these articles spread out on tables in a room set apart for the purpose, so that they might easily be inspected for identification. Many persons inspected them, but it is only just to record that the only articles identified as stolen were those that formed the subject of the various charges.

Here is a reminiscence within a reminiscence. Funnily enough, this collection of bright articles brought an incident of my boyhood to my mind. I lived in the country, and was very successful in rearing and training wild birds taken from the nest,



particularly magpies. I had one magpie so tame that I gave it complete liberty, only shutting it up in a barn at night away from cats. It became well known and a great favourite in the neighbourhood. At this time petty thefts occurred; thimbles, gold rings, pins, and other trinkets were stolen, causing a good deal of uneasiness and speculation as to who the thief might be. One bright summer morning my magpie was seen to hop into an open bedroom window, hop out again, and fly away towards home with something glittering in its beak, and then a gold bangle was missed from the dressing-table at the window. I at once made a search, and found on a beam in the barn not only the bangle, but quite a collection of other bright articles, including all those stolen and others that had not been missed.

When Mr. and Mrs. Blank appeared on remand, after a week in gaol, they looked much the worse for wear. He suffered from a week's deprivation of the attention of his valet, and had evidently not had a shave during that time; her condition was pitiable, and the magistrate allowed them to be seated in the dock, for she was obviously in a state of collapse. The husband bore himself with a quiet dignity that impressed me as he sat with his arm round his wife, supporting and encouraging her. The scene in the court was in great contrast to their first appearance, when there was no one present who knew them; now they were defended by that legal luminary who was afterwards Director of Public Prosecutions, and he was instructed by one of the leading firms of solicitors in the City, particularly well known to

bankers and stockbrokers, so many of whom were present that it reminded one of Throgmorton Street.

The prosecution was conducted by the Senior Counsel to the Treasury, now as well known and esteemed as a judge as he was then known and feared by criminals as a prosecutor. The evidence called by me on the first hearing was repeated, and one or two additional charges were gone into, and finally both prisoners were committed for trial to the County of London Sessions on all charges, and, through their counsel, they pleaded "Not guilty" and reserved their defence.

Then arose the question of bail, and, as it was quite clear that the two prisoners had no record as criminals, but were well known as persons of position and wealth, it did not appear that there was any likelihood of their absconding, so bail was not opposed by the counsel prosecuting or by the police, and the magistrate granted it—two sureties in £5,000 for each of the prisoners (separate sureties for each) and their own recognisance in the sum of £10,000 each for their appearance, a total of £40,000, the largest amount within the memory of man in a case of this kind; but, large as it was, it was not prohibitive, for, as a matter of fact, there were gentlemen present who would actually have deposited securities for £2,000,000.

The accused (they had ceased to be prisoners) were committed to take their trial at the County of London Sessions, held at the Sessions House on Clerkenwell Green. Here minor criminal charges in the County of London were tried, while more serious cases such as burglary, robbery with violence, and murder were

tried at the Central Criminal Court. The sessions were presided over by a chairman who was, in fact, the judge, and on interesting occasions he was assisted by county justices. When Mr. and Mrs. Blank were tried there was a very full bench of justices and the court was crowded, not by those who usually attend criminal trials, authors, actors, and criminologists (so called), in search of an object lesson, and others to whom the relation of sordid details of passion and tragedy provide a sensation out of the ordinary. No doubt a few of those present were genuinely interested in kleptomania as a pathological study, but the majority were wives of financiers and other City business men, most of them matronly, and all in sympathy with the accused, particularly with the wife, who entered the dock supported by her husband. As he tenderly tried to console her, she collapsed, and was attended to by wardresses with restoratives.

The trial created a record, for never before—nor since, as far as I know—were so many leaders of the Bar briefed in a trial of simple larceny. For the prosecution the barrister who appeared at the police court—who is now a judge—had a junior—who is now a magistrate; while the defence briefed Sir Edward Clarke, K.C., M.P., Sir Frank Lockwood, K.C., M.P., Sir Charles Matthews—afterwards Director of Public Prosecutions—Sir Charles Gill, and several other leading barristers—one of whom is now a magistrate at Bow Street.

The indictments were formally read over to the accused by the Clerk of the Court, who then called upon them to plead "Guilty" or "Not guilty."

Without hesitation the husband, in a clear and emphatic manner, replied "Not guilty." The wife, who was in a state of uncontrollable distress, obviously could give no answer, so Sir Edward Clarke announced to the court that, for reasons he would afterwards state, she would plead "Guilty" to all charges. The cross-examination at the police court had indicated that this would be the course pursued at the trial, but there had been no other sign that the husband was not sharing the responsibility with his wife; he had stood in the dock with her, supporting, and consoling her, and had never by word or action suggested that she was more to blame than he was. The trial was the climax, and he was in the hands of the high legal authorities paid to defend them. It was clear that the woman had stolen the articles referred to in the indictments; in some cases the man was with her at the time; he may have been careless; but there was no evidence upon which he could be tried after his wife had taken the responsibility by pleading "Guilty."

The chairman instructed the jury to find a verdict of "Not guilty" in regard to the husband, and he was at once released. As he left his wife's side she was in such a condition that she had to be lifted bodily from the dock and down the stairs to the cells below, where she remained while Sir Frank Lockwood and Sir Edward Clarke addressed the court in mitigation of sentence. It was made clear that they were very wealthy, held a high social position in America, and that there were many gentlemen present of high position in this country and in America who were ready to testify to their honourable character. The

husband, in speaking for his wife, said that they were on a holiday together here, and that she had ample credit. He also said that she suffered from an illness which, at times, rendered her unaccountable for her actions. Several specialists on mental diseases and the diseases of women, whose names were particularly well known in connection with different hospitals in London, were called to prove that she suffered from serious physical trouble, which was accompanied generally by some form of mania, such as kleptomania, and the prison doctor who had had her under his care was called to support their evidence.

Then there was a silence that could almost be felt; the chairman looked at the justices and the justices looked at the chairman, for the time had come to pronounce sentence on the woman's plea of "Guilty," for, although evidence had been given by specialists upon which a plea of insanity might have been submitted to the jury, the eminent counsel responsible for the defence—no doubt wisely—had not taken this course. Finally the chairman and all the justices retired; they were absent for a quarter of an hour, and when they returned, in single file, from the judge's room to the bench every one looked as though he heartily wished he had been assisting at some other function. There was profound silence while the unfortunate woman was brought up from below into the dock to receive her sentence. The chairman addressed the court in grave tones, which showed the emotion he felt, and said that they had listened carefully to an extremely painful case in which sympathy was so powerful as to almost interfere

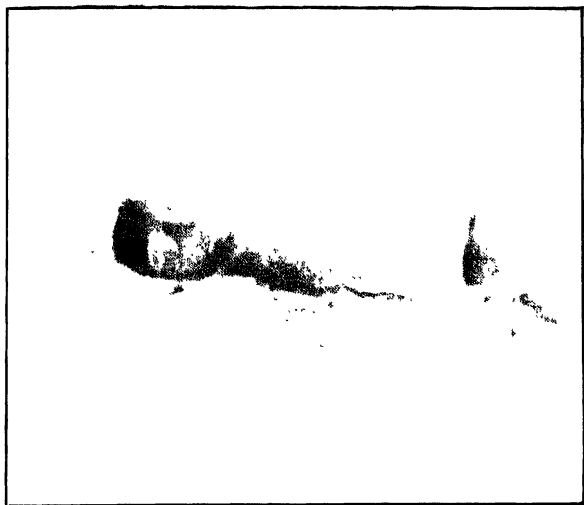
with justice ; they realised the consequence of their sentence, which he, as their mouthpiece, must pass. " The sentence of the Court is that the prisoner goes to prison for three months."

I have never witnessed a more painful scene in this or any other court, although I have been present at many scenes, particularly at the Central Criminal Court. The prisoner gave an agonising shriek, " Oh, my God ! " then was carried bodily down below to the cells, where her pitiful screams could be heard, the sounds gradually diminishing as she reached the bottom and was borne along the stone passage to the cells. Many of the ladies in court completely lost their heads, shook their hands and parasols threateningly towards the judge, and I distinctly heard some of them exclaim, " You brute ! " The venerable, bald-headed, side-whiskered, black-robed, snuff-taking usher—who usually sat in a corner out of sight of the judge, and at intervals awoke from his slumbers to shout " Silence ! " in a voice like a fog-horn, often without reason and at most inopportune moments—forgot to slumber, and, when the storm broke following the sentence there was a tear in his watery eye, and there must have been a lump in his throat, for, although there was grave reason for his " Silence ! " he was dumb. The chairman and justices left the bench as though glad to escape, and the ladies in the court dispersed quickly and silently.

The sterling gold standard of British law and justice had proved that the dollar was not " almighty " ; but, " Mr. Labourer," wealth and influence were so apparent in this case that, if any injustice was done,

the desire to guard against an injustice to such as you was the cause of it. True, the lady was released, on medical grounds, soon after her conviction ; and I saw her husband remove her from Wormwood Scrubbs Prison in an ambulance, attended by two nurses, who, without delay, accompanied her across the Atlantic. British justice might otherwise have been responsible for her death, and, as the primary object of punishment is the prevention of crime, and it was clear that this lady would not commit another crime, at least in this country, why detain her here at the expense of the British public ?

Stealing or kleptomania ? I have dealt with many cases of theft, but the only kleptomaniac I can recognise was the magpie of my boyhood : the things he stole he could neither eat, wear, dispose of, or make into a nest, and he derived no satisfaction from the possession of them. He had no sense of reason, no conscientious small voice, and had never heard the old saying, " He that takes what isn't his'n, when he's caught is sent to prison."



NANCY PARSONS  
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PAINTING  
[p. 182]



HON. MRS. YORKE  
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PAINTING





## CHAPTER XXII

### “ CAT ” BURGLARS

THE “ cat ” burglar is quite a new bogey to the fortunate owners of valuable jewellery, particularly in country mansions, and I suggest that he is a spectre that might well be exorcised as an unwarranted libel on a very useful domestic animal.

I have seen cats run up a tree or a fence by clinging with their claws, but I have never seen one climb an iron pipe or a wall, and a burglar, to do this, must have something to hold on to and generally some support for his feet without assistance from finger- or toe-nails. A monkey could climb a water pipe or a portico and jump from one support to another much better than a cat, and with the advantage of a longer reach, so why not call those who perform these acrobatic crimes “ monkey ” burglars, and leave pussy alone ?

The methods of burglars of to-day are much the same as they were twenty years ago, when the “ Cat ” variety was unknown. If this term is used for classification, I suggest that it is much too general, and does not adequately convey, even to the police, the particular method adopted by the burglar. I remember a much more discriminating classification ; for instance, a burglary committed by climbing a portico was classed as—burglary (portico) ; by climbing a stack-pipe—burglary (stack-pipe) ; by the use of a ladder as—burglary (ladder) ; by entering an attic window—burglary (attic window), and so on. As I have pointed

out in another chapter, burglars are very conservative in their methods, and such a classification, following a description of the stolen property, has often led to the prompt arrest of a criminal known to be partial to the particular method indicated, with the stolen articles in his possession.

AMAZING THEFT OF ART TREASURES

A £50,000 HAUL

RAID ON A PARK LANE MANSION

£1,000 REWARD

Thus read the headlines of columns in the newspapers in February 1907, when a burglary occurred at the mansion of a famous art collector in Park Lane. As it happened, it was the last crime of any importance entrusted to me to investigate before I left for Spain, and as, in this year of grace 1926, it would no doubt have been called a "cat" burglary, the particulars, as I remember them, may be of interest.

The house was a large one with a basement. The front door was in a street parallel with Park Lane, had steps leading up to it, and was covered by a large portico with a pillar each side close to the street. These pillars were joined to the area railings, which were about five feet high. The other side of the house, which was really the front, had a walled garden between it and Park Lane, and commanded a splendid view of Hyde Park.

When I arrived at Scotland Yard on the morning following the burglary I was at once despatched to take up the enquiry. I lost no time, and very soon introduced myself to the famous art collector at his

house. I first interviewed the butler, who slept in the basement and was responsible for securing the place at night. He was quite clear that, of the staff of two or three footmen and some half a dozen maid-servants, he was the last up, and just before he retired, about midnight, saw that all doors and windows in the basement and on the ground floor were secure, and the electric alarms with which they were fitted in working order. He slept soundly until a few minutes to six the next morning, when he was awakened by the alarm ringing in his room. He got up at once, found everything in the basement and on the ground floor as he had left it, except the front door, and that was open. He at once called other servants, and his master, also awakened by the alarm, came down. They all ran in different directions through the small streets and mews at the back of Park Lane but could neither see nor hear anyone—not even a policeman.

I should like to note here that whatever time in the night a burglar may enter a large house or business establishment, where the streets are well patrolled by the police, he usually watches the man on the beat go by, and if there is another on the opposite side of the road, he watches both away before he enters. He nearly always leaves, however, at six o'clock in the morning, and I have known a van to be driven up then to remove the plunder. He knows that at this time the police on night duty are making their way towards the station for relief, and that those relieving them have not yet reached their beats.

It was at once apparent to me that the ground floor and basement of the house were practically

impregnable, and that when the alarm went off, just before six o'clock in the morning, it was caused by the opening of the front door from the inside by the burglar, for I judged that there had been only one inside the house. How did he get in? The only rooms from which articles had been stolen were the drawing-room on the first floor, overlooking Hyde Park, and the smoke-room adjoining, immediately above the front door and the portico. In the drawing-room were found three finger-stalls cut from a worn black kid glove, an old table-knife, and about an inch of a very common candle recently used, evidently left there by the burglar, while on the rich blue carpet of the smoke-room I saw what I first took to be a small patch of blood, which proved to be a crushed red berry about the size of a hazel-nut—a juniper berry; the only place in or near the house where there were any others was on the top of the portico, just outside the smoke-room window, and here there were a number of juniper plants in pots with similar red berries on them and others lying about round the pots.

The reader will appreciate that the red berry indicated clearly that entry had been made through the smoke-room window from the top of the portico. When the burglary was discovered, the catch of this window was fastened, no doubt by the thief, with the idea of concealing his mode of entry. I found that the catch worked easily, as though it had been oiled, and that between the two sashes, near the catch, the paint on the frames had been recently scraped as by something rather too large being passed between them, while on the brass catch there was a slight, though

distinct, mark as from the blade of a knife. The old table-knife left behind showed marks of paint on the blade corresponding with the paint removed from the window frames, and I found that to force the catch back with it from the roof of the portico was quite easy.

Had there been any doubt at all as to the burglar having entered from the portico, this was removed when I examined the iron railings and one of the pillars adjoining ; the railings showed marks as from someone standing on them with dirty boots (it had been raining heavily the previous night), while there were fresh marks on the pillar indicating that it had been climbed recently. I judged that it had taken two men to make the marks on the railings and that one of them stood on them while the other climbed on to his shoulders and so reached the top of the portico.

A word here to the unwary : What is the use of making the lower part of your house as safe as a prison if you leave the first floor unprotected ? I know of no better method of securing windows, short of shutters and iron bars, which are not always convenient, than the old-fashioned thumb-screw (not the instrument of torture), sold by ironmongers for the purpose. If you do not want the windows open while the rooms are unoccupied, then put one screw through the two middle frames, just behind the catch ; if you want the windows open for ventilation, put a screw in the window frame each side, about six inches above the middle frame ; this will enable you to open it six inches top or bottom or three inches either way. You may think that burglars will break the glass and so take out the screws, but they will find

this very difficult from the outside, and they have a great horror of breaking glass in quiet surroundings.

I at once obtained a preliminary description of the articles stolen and telegraphed these to all police stations somewhat as follows :

#### PROPERTY STOLEN

At Park Lane, between midnight 11th and 6 a.m. 12th: Oil painting by Gainsborough, portrait of lady, half-figure, lace scarf, turban head-dress, about 35 ins. by 28 ins. ; oil painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, portrait of a lady playing a mandoline, blue dress, about 36 ins. by 28ins., both roughly cut from frames. Five Louis XV gold snuff-boxes enamelled variously ; twelve Louis XVI ditto ; one gold rose enamelled snuff-box. One Louis XIV agate and gold-mounted watch, enamelled dial, hands set diamonds. One eighteenth-century French miniature portrait of a lady seated playing a guitar, diamond-bordered frame. One miniature of a lady seated gazing at a locket, dog at feet, diamond-bordered frame. Value £35,000. Immediate notice to dealers, pawnbrokers, etc., and enquiry as to movements of known portico thieves and others.—Burglary (portico).

These articles were all very beautiful and valuable works of art ; the two oil paintings were famous pictures ; the one by Gainsborough was a portrait of "Nancy Parsons" with her exquisitely beautiful face slightly turned to the left and her hands crossed upon her lap ; it had been so roughly and ruthlessly ripped out of its frame as to leave a part of the beautiful

fingers of one hand behind. The picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds was a portrait of the “Hon. Mrs. Charles Yorke.”

It was estimated by some that the collection in the house was worth anything up to a million pounds sterling. I saw a great deal of it and of the owner during the weeks that I was engaged upon the case. On my first visit to the drawing-room I stood on a chair to examine the frame from which the Gainsborough picture had been cut; the owner looked on with a twinkle in his eye, and then I realised that the chair I was standing on was worth its weight in gold. He had a passion for his treasures, and his salons were furnished with nothing else, all for sale at his price. If he considered a deal at all, it was on a very large scale, and he would entertain a promising customer to a dinner in his dining-room, prepared by his chef, which would have delighted an epicure, accompanied by the choicest of wines and cigars, in a setting rivalling some of the famous salons in the Palace of Versailles—thus he showed his collection to the best advantage.

Such was the treasure house which was burgled by means of an old table-knife, the only instrument used, while the only accessories were the candle and the old finger-stalls. The knife had “80, Harrow Road,” on the blade, and, as will be seen later, proved a means of identification. The finger-stalls were no doubt used to prevent finger-prints being left; the burglar probably had a full set and dropped the three that were left behind. At the best the burglary was a clumsy affair, and evidently not the work of any skilled cracksman: strange as it may seem, this made



it more difficult to trace the thieves. I judged that it was put up by someone familiar with the house and the collection in it, and, as I found that the owner had interviewed in his smoke-room practically anyone who claimed to have something of artistic value to sell, I questioned him very carefully as to all visitors of this kind, and he gave me particulars of some that I traced and placed under observation, but all to no purpose, and so the time passed until I had to leave for Spain.

The result of my investigation may be summarised as follows :

Burglary.—Valuable property stolen that could not well be disposed of ; by a clumsy thief who climbed a portico assisted by another ; put up by someone familiar with the premises, probably a dealer. *£1,000 reward.*

How effective the offer of this large reward proved to be, and how correct my conclusions were, may be seen from the accounts which appeared in the daily papers a month or so later ; and I will finish the chapter with brief particulars from these accounts.

A foreign waiter out of employment, a wretched-looking man, pallid, disreputable and apparently poverty-stricken, was arrested and charged with stealing the property described of the value of *£35,000*. The evidence of arrest indicated that he was inveigled to a certain place by a man, whose identity was naturally kept secret, so that he should be arrested ; that his betrayer actually pointed him out to the police and told them where the stolen articles were to be found. As the case proceeded, it was suggested

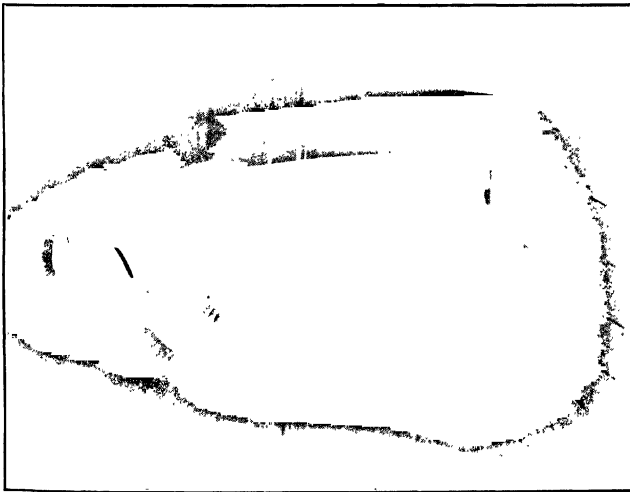
that the prisoner was the tool of a second man, who took an active part with him in the burglary, and because the prisoner happened to be the lighter of the two, helped him to climb the portico, himself remaining outside. This man was never arrested ; and, reading between the lines, it seems natural to conclude that he was the Judas of the piece. This is how the thousand pounds reward worked, and considering that the thieves were of no account, even amongst criminals, and that neither of them had any other chance of profiting by their plunder, it was only what was anticipated.

The prisoner had been out of work for months, and with his wife and three children occupied two wretchedly-furnished rooms in a basement in South London, and here nearly all the stolen articles, except the two paintings, were found by the police. He had been married five years, his wife was English, quite respectable, little more than a girl, and she, and her three babies, were said to have been in great distress. He had been convicted before he married her, but she did not know this, and since their marriage he appeared to have tried to make good. Who can say how much he was influenced by the distress of his wife and children and the temptation to help himself to some of the treasures which he had been told were so easy to secure ? He pleaded “ Guilty ” at the Central Criminal Court ; his sentence was seven years’ penal servitude and to be deported at its expiration.

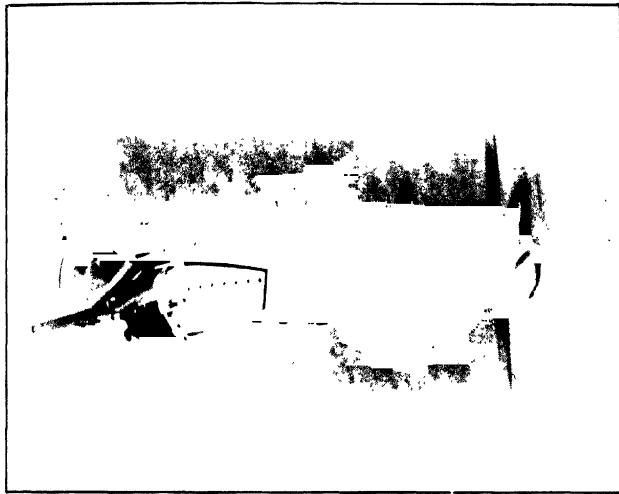
The Judge, in passing this salutary sentence, referred to the property still missing—the two oil paintings—and suggested that any information the convict might give to the police as to these could be

brought to the notice of the Secretary of State. This heavy sentence had an immediate effect, for a day or two later a smart-looking man, elderly, with grey hair and moustache, described as a picture dealer, was arrested and charged with receiving the two oil paintings, "Nancy Parsons" and "The Hon. Mrs. Yorke," and when his residence was searched, table-knives were found with "80, Harrow Road," on the blades. Later the burglar gave evidence against the receiver, and claimed that the accused not only arranged the burglary, but furnished the table-knife to force back the catch of the window over the portico.

It was proved that the picture dealer had done business with the art collector at his Park Lane residence and had a knowledge of the smoke-room and the contents of the house; in fact, when he was arrested he acknowledged that he had been to the house and had done business there. The burglar, in his evidence against the receiver, said that the latter came to his house and took away the two pictures, saying that they were fakes and worth nothing, and he said he believed this because he had a picture himself worth half a crown which looked just as nice. It seems only just that the receiver was found guilty, and, like the burglar, was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude. It is acknowledged, however, that the receiver is worse than the thief, and it is probable that the receiver had the greater punishment, for it may be that the assistance the thief gave in putting him away was duly recognised by a reduction of his sentence. I understand that the two oil paintings have never been recovered. I wonder where they are!



MOZO DE ESQUADRA (OFFICER)  
MY CHIEF OF STAFF AT BARCELONA



MOZO DE ESQUADRA  
MY DOOR-KEEPER AT BARCELONA



## CHAPTER XXIII

### BARCELONA—"ARROW'S POLICE"

EARLY in 1907, when I was nearing the completion of my twenty-six years' service that would entitle me to retire on a full pension should I wish to do so, the Commissioner of Police was approached by an official from Spain, introduced by the Spanish Ambassador and accompanied by the British Vice-Consul at Barcelona. His mission was a secret one—to engage a suitable and experienced officer from the Criminal Investigation Department at the Yard, to organise and direct a secret detective service in Spain, to deal with the numerous bomb outrages there, particularly in Barcelona, which was then regarded as the centre from which those responsible for these crimes operated. I was then the senior Chief Inspector in the Department, and the appointment was eventually offered to me. I received the permission of the Commissioner to accept it, and finally decided to do so, arranging to commence as soon as I completed my twenty-six years' service in the July following. The salary offered was attractive, and the engagement appeared to open out a new field for enterprise.

In April I received a formal engagement for three years, signed jointly by the Mayor of Barcelona and the President of the Provincial Council, at a salary of £800 for the first year, £900 for the second, and £1,000 for the third, with the promise of a substantial insurance against injury or death, and an undertaking

to pay my expenses for a preliminary visit to Barcelona.

I went to Barcelona early in May, under an assumed name, and, although I stayed at the same hotel as the chief of the Government Police, my identity was never suspected. I had a very pleasant four weeks at Barcelona as "Mr. Matthews," a great contrast to the hectic time I afterwards spent there as "Mr. Arrow," and, when I left to return to London, I opened the books of Messrs. Thomas Cook & Son at Barcelona as their first customer.

I resigned my appointment at the Yard on the 17th July, 1907. I joined the London Police on the 18th July, 1881, so I completed twenty-six years' service to a day, and received the full pension to which that service entitled me. I was by no means tired of my work, and, looking back on that period, so full of incident and adventure, I felt that I should like to serve the time over again ; but I saw little prospect of further advancement at the Yard, and a new career, such as the organisation of a secret police in a country like Spain appeared to offer, appealed to me.

I lost no time in getting to work in Barcelona, for I commenced my duties there on the 23rd July. I went openly as "Mr. Arrow," and found that I was expected, for, while my luggage was being examined at the frontier, a Spanish official suddenly seized me, pressed his chest to mine and placed his arm round my shoulders. I thought at first that this was a peculiar method of searching for contraband, but found that I was merely being embraced as a confrère by the Chief of Police at the frontier station. Before I had been in Spain very long I got accustomed to this

form of salute ; there is nothing effeminate about it, and it expresses the warmth and impulsiveness of the Latin character.

It was dark when I arrived in Barcelona, and I saw that there was a huge crowd on the platform and cameras prepared to photograph me by flashlight. I waited in the train until joined by a friend who came to meet me. Then I slipped out at the bottom end of the train, on the other side, and left by a goods entrance without giving up my ticket. The next day I found I had gained great credit by this, for it was reported that I had donned one of my many disguises, and had slipped through the crowd without being recognised. This escape, however, availed me nothing, and for a week after my arrival I found photographers on the steps of my hotel, at my office door, and dogging me in the streets.

Before I arrived in Barcelona to commence my duties a campaign had been started against me by a section of the Press, and public meetings were organised to protest against my appointment. I cannot say that I did not receive a great deal of support, for in Spain to be attacked by one party is to be taken up by another, but the party warfare that was carried on over me made my position very difficult. All kinds of allegations were made against me. It was even stated that I was not Mr. Arrow at all, and that I had had a criminal career in Mexico.

Before I had been a month in the city a monster meeting took place at one of the theatres to protest against my appointment. It was held on a Sunday afternoon and was attended by some two thousand



persons. No public meeting can take place in Spain unless it is authorised by the police. A police official always attends in an official capacity, and this was no exception. As a matter of fact I did not know that such a meeting was taking place, and I was not in any way represented at it. Unfortunately, a disturbance took place, shots were fired, and a young man was killed. It was at once announced in the theatre that my representatives had fired the shots and had killed this young man, and to the cry of "Death to Arrow!" the crowd left the theatre and made for my office. There, after a demonstration accompanied by cries of "Death to Arrow!" and the breaking of a few windows, the crowd was dispersed by the civil guard, and made for my hotel. This was fortunately close to the barracks and the Government Offices, and here again the crowd was dispersed, and the hotel surrounded by armed Government Police.

Although no newspaper can be published in Spain without the approval of the Government authority, yet after this incident papers were published, and placards were distributed in Barcelona showing my photograph by the side of that of the young man killed in the theatre. The former was described as "The Spy, Arrow," and the latter as "The Victim," and above the two photographs in very large type were the words "Kill the Assassin."

This incident gave me a good deal of trouble, and during the whole time that I was in the city I was not allowed to forget it. From time to time my enemies called on me to "remember the death of this unfortunate man." About this time I was requested by

the chief of the Government Police to abstain from visiting certain restaurants, and was also asked not to go to a theatre without arranging for protection beforehand, and an armed guard was maintained outside my office and round my hotel.

Some of the few friends I had shunned me as dangerous, and the hotels were not anxious to give me accommodation. At this time the weather was very hot and mosquitoes were plentiful. This, with the continual murmur of the gruff voices of the Spanish Police officers under my bedroom window, and the trot of the horses of the Civil Guard on the stone pavement patrolling the block, caused me many a sleepless night. As I lay in bed, these horses performed a kind of Turkish patrol. I could hear them pass the hotel, and then trace the diminishing sound of their trot round the corner of the block, behind the hotel, round the other side, until it grew to its loudest in again passing my window. I do not know if the Government Police were really afraid that something would happen to me, or if they were particularly desirous of making me believe so, but they certainly took great pains to guard me. However, nothing happened. I went about freely and never suffered the slightest inconvenience, except that I was an object of curiosity.

I was provided with a palatial suite of offices, containing telephones, electric light, and all up-to-date appliances. With the assistance of a secretary, who spoke some English, I set to work to prepare for my police force, by designing registers and forms, and drawing up regulations after the pattern of those in

use at Scotland Yard. I passed three months satisfactorily at this work. During this time there were no bomb outrages, and everyone appeared to be satisfied with the position of affairs. When my office was ready I became anxious for the appointment of my police force, but difficulties cropped up, and the months passed by, until the Christmas week arrived and found me still without a force to organise.

Two days before Christmas Day the peace that Barcelona had enjoyed for six months was broken, for two serious bomb outrages occurred in the city, and another bomb exploded on New Year's Eve. It had seemed to me as I passed to and from my office that the people smiled on me, thankfully and encouragingly, as though giving me credit for the peace they were enjoying. Now I felt that these kindly glances were changed into looks of reproach, as though to say, "Arrow, we trusted you, and you have failed us."

The cry was then, "What is Arrow doing?" ; and the Press, in duty bound, took up this cry.

After some encouraging correspondence with an official of the Government at Madrid, I paid several visits to that city, with the result that the King of Spain signed an order dated 26 January, 1908, published in the official Gazette as a Royal Order on 3rd February, 1908, establishing a special section of police at Barcelona, for the investigation of terrorist crimes, with all the authority and privileges of Government Police, including the right to carry arms. Thus what was known as "Arrow's Police" came into existence, with offices in Barcelona which I named *La Oficina de*

*Investigación Criminal*, after the offices in London in which I had served so many years.

Under this Royal Order an official chief was appointed, selected from the Catalan provincial police called the "Mozos de Esquadra," a force peculiar to Catalonia and recruited entirely from natives of the province. This force has a history and traditions of which it is justly proud. It is a local Civil Guard, but, unlike that splendid force, it performs its duties on foot. It was originally formed to protect the inhabitants against brigands, and its success in this direction gained it a reputation which still lives, for it is even now a terror to offenders on account of its ready and unerring use of the rifle. Its peculiar and picturesque uniform is traditional, and, when I was in attendance, one of this force—a man whom I felt I could trust in any emergency—was always on guard in uniform, with his rifle, outside my office.

While anarchists in Spain were drastic and persistent in the reprisals they exacted from authority, wealth and religion, the authorities were equally drastic in their methods of dealing with them. Early in 1907 a man named Rull was convicted, with others, of being concerned in some eighty bomb outrages. Rull and most of those associated with him were known to be anarchists, but the crimes for which they were responsible were not anarchist crimes, for Rull had acted as an informer to the Government, and, for fear this lucrative employment should cease, continued the outrages himself. He suffered death, but still the so-called anarchist bomb explosions continued, until matters reached a climax in the last week of

July 1909, commonly known in Barcelona as "The Bloody Week."

At 9 o'clock Monday morning, 26th July, 1909, the Rambla, that lovely promenade in Barcelona, with its double avenues of plane trees, seemed much as usual, but the crowd had an air of anxious anticipation as of, a threatened storm. In the Calle Fernando, the Bond Street of Barcelona, the shops were all shuttered, and the assistants stood at the open doors watching the passers-by, and asking curiously what was happening. There was no extra show of police, and no troops were to be seen, but at about noon the police appeared in the Rambla in force, armed with rifles in addition to their usual revolvers and side arms. They formed up in pairs along the Rambla, and stood at ease under the trees.

An hour later the trams stopped running, and it was found that some of them had been seized in the Calle Mayor and in the Paralelo, derailed, and converted into barricades across the main streets. Still the public circulated freely by the Rambla, until about three o'clock, when at the sound of a bugle, the police ran and formed up in skirmishing order across the bottom of the Rambla near the sea, and commenced firing towards the sea. The civilians in the Rambla ran like rabbits in all directions to the shelter of doorways and side streets. The firing ceased, and it was found that an attempt to start a barricade near the bottom of the Rambla had been repulsed. At four o'clock the Civil Governor resigned and the Military Governor took charge and at once declared the city in a state of siege.

Monday night passed with some desultory firing, but without any serious attempt on the part of the revolutionists to attack the defended area ; they contented themselves with constructing heavy barricades across the streets leading to their strongholds from the Rambla and from the central square. During Tuesday and Wednesday, day and night, the position remained apparently the same, and the Rambla had the appearance of a camp of soldiers and police at arms, awaiting attack ; at night they bivouacked upon the ground and in doorways, sentries being posted at all approaches.

The revolutionists were not idle ; they utilised the time in strengthening their positions, and they constructed new barricades in outlying working-class and anarchist districts of the city. They also did something else that will live in history when other circumstances of the revolution are forgotten ; they attacked and burned the churches, convents, and other religious institutions, many renowned throughout the world as magnificent specimens of ancient architecture.

The revolutionists in the manufacturing towns around had responded to the call upon them, but had been cut off from communication with their centre in the city by their comrades. It proved, however, that they, meeting with little or no opposition, had carried all before them, had seized the Government and other official buildings, and in the belief that their comrades in Barcelona had met with equal success, had actually proclaimed themselves part of a Republican Government, and had appointed deputies to represent them.

Thursday morning found the Government forces in the city sufficiently strengthened by the arrival of seasoned troops, chiefly by sea from Tarragona and the Isle of Majorca, to enable a systematic attack to be commenced upon the barricades. It found also the walls and houses placarded with a proclamation, signed by the Captain-General, calling upon all law-abiding citizens to remain in their houses, under penalty of being shot at sight.

Then the troops commenced to operate in earnest, and along the avenue in the centre of the Rambla, usually reserved for foot passengers, infantry marched in file on either side under the trees, while cavalry and artillery clattered down the centre. They drew the fire of the revolutionists as they passed the ends of the barricaded streets and met with a few casualties, but the rebels generally reserved their fire as though to await the attack they knew was inevitable. The troops formed up in skirmishing order in front of the approaches to the barricaded districts of the Paralelo and Gracia. In some cases, so formidable were the barricades that artillery had to be used to demolish them.

A heavy musketry fire was directed down the street, then a company of infantry moved quickly forward in units, taking cover in doorways, and a brisk fire was directed against the barricades. Then another company ran forward, taking cover, while the first company penetrated still farther down the street. This operation was repeated until the first company was within striking distance of the barricade, then, after a final clearing volley from the end of the street, they took it at the point of the bayonet.

In the city alone, there was probably a mob of 20,000 men, women, and even children operating against the military, generally without recognised leaders, totally without discipline, and often without weapons other than the large paving-stones the women had accumulated upon the roofs of the high-parapeted houses. The carnage must have been fearful if the troops had not shown considerable leniency and obedience to orders in taking prisoners bloodlessly whenever it was possible. The barricades once captured, the streets in the disaffected districts were cleared and occupied. The revolutionists thus dispersed, took refuge in adjacent houses, from which they fired and rained missiles upon the troops, until these houses in turn were cleared by rifle fire, artillery and assault.

Those who escaped with arms, spread themselves all over the city, by the flat roofs which are used ordinarily for drying clothes and as playgrounds, and often communicate throughout the whole length of a street. From roofs and balconies an irregular and irritating fire was kept up upon the troops in the street, until dark, and in some places all night. This firing was especially noticeable in the Rambla, which was lined with troops on both sides under the trees, all with rifles ready, and eyes fixed upon balconies and roofs. The sharp and continuous, "crack, crack" of the revolvers of the rebels was as terrifying to the peaceful citizens in their houses as it was harassing to the troops below, and when at intervals these sharp cracks were mixed with numerous loud, mysterious reports, apparently upon the roofs and balconies near at hand, the soldiers lost their heads and fired



wildly until stopped by the bugle call to "cease fire."

Then detachments of sharpshooters were sent through the houses and hotels to clear the roofs. A party of police went to the Grand Hotel, where the first to reach the roof was shot through the neck. He was carried below into the luxurious lounge and died there amongst the terrified guests. The cook of the Falcon Hotel, adjoining, was shot dead as he rested upon his bed on the top floor, probably by a stray bullet. Those police who accompanied their comrade when he was shot on the roof of the hotel saw a man disappear from a distant roof as their comrade fell, and attributed the shot to him. They cautiously concealed themselves and waited ; presently the man reappeared, and, covering him carefully with their rifles, they fired. He fell, and they took note of the house upon which he lay. After some delay in descending and locating it again, they searched it, and, in a room close to the roof, they found a Remington repeating rifle of the latest model, and a number of live cartridges with explosive bullets, such as are used to shoot elephants.

There was no trace of the man, alive or dead, but from this time there was no repetition of those mysterious reports which had caused the peaceful inhabitants of the Grand Hotel and the soldiers in the street in front to believe that an attack was being made at their very elbows. The explosive bullets fired from this rifle, bursting against the walls at the back, and against the fronts of the houses opposite, with a variety of reports according to the substance and position of the point struck, made it appear that a dozen different

persons were firing from different places quite near.

Towards dark the shooting practically ceased, and when Friday morning broke, the roofs were found to be occupied by soldiers, whose heads popped up from behind chimneys, and whose rifles could be seen protruding from garret windows in all directions. About ten o'clock, firing, chiefly from revolvers, was again general throughout the central part of the city. The troops, however, were not drawn by it into wild response as on Thursday, and only replied occasionally when they had something tangible to fire at. It soon died away, and for some two or three hours there was a silence, which, as the usual noise of traffic in the streets was entirely suspended, could be felt, causing the people in the almost air-tight houses to hold what little breath was left them, in suspense. Not daring to open their windows, they left their houses and went into the streets for information. No one interfered with them ; they were not shot at, and the few who were bold enough to lead were followed by the more timid, until there was quite a crowd in the Rambla, and the bright sunlit air again brought smiles of hope and encouragement to their anxious, pale faces.

They told each other that all was over, "*gràcias á Dios!*" but at five o'clock, as though by arrangement, firing again commenced from the houses and roofs. The disappointed and terrified people in the streets ran to shelter, as they had done on Monday afternoon. The rattle of revolvers and other small arms increased, until it attained a pitch that it had scarcely reached in the five previous days. Apparently a desperate and

general attack was being made on the troops. These took little notice, for they could see no one firing, no one seemed to be hit, and no one was seen to fall. The firing died away as twilight fell. It might have been that the revolutionists were firing away the remainder of their ammunition in a solemn volley over their lost cause and their many dead companions, for a silence, as of a dead city, succeeded, and continued throughout the night.

On Saturday morning about ten o'clock, when the people were still confined behind barred doors and closed windows awaiting the recommencement of the firing, unarmed soldiers of the General's staff went from door to door, glad with the news they brought. The Captain-General had sent round the notice, "Open your doors and windows, and go about your business in peace."

The military authority and its small garrison have been blamed for the enormous destruction of church property, in and around Barcelona, during the first days of the revolution. What the little garrison did, with the assistance of the Government Police and the Civil Guard, was to concentrate its small force in the city in order to hold the barracks, the Government offices, the banks, the railway terminus and the port, until it was sufficiently strengthened by reinforcements to extend its operations. This it did well, and save for the promptness and courage of this small force, Spain would have been faced with a revolution which would not have been quelled in one short week.

The revolution of July 1909, culminating in the terrible week I have described, was vividly recalled

three months later by the trial of Francisco Ferrer for complicity in the events of July. Ferrer was sentenced to death by a court martial and shot in the fortress prison of Montjuich, which stands high above the entrance to the harbour of Barcelona. Travellers entering this beautiful harbour from the sea will be impressed by this fortress. It has a reputation for cruelty, hardship, and even torture in past days, as dread and sinister as its appearance. It was the usual place of execution for criminals, and perhaps others, condemned in Barcelona.

To a new generation the story of Ferrer may not convey a great deal, but, at the time of which I write, his name was on everyone's lips and his execution convulsed Europe. Historians of Spain will give due importance to this episode ; I only refer to it in so far as it came under my personal notice.

Ferrer was as closely identified with the Socialists in Spain as Jaurès was in France, but whatever the result of his propaganda, it must be admitted that he did his country a service by promoting education. He founded what were called "Modern Schools" in Barcelona, devoting his not very large fortune to their support.

Ferrer was arrested by some country men, "irregular special constables," outside Barcelona, and handed over to the Government Police. He was tried in the Montjuich prison, the proceedings lasting only five hours, but, although he made a very spirited defence, he preserved a dignified and polite demeanour throughout. The Court, after consideration, found him guilty, and sentence of death was read over to him

in his cell. He was shot in the prison. He met his fate with great calmness, courteously refused the ministrations of the chaplain, and faced the firing-party standing erect. It is recorded that his last words were "Boys, keep cool and shoot well. *Viva la Escuela Moderna!*"

Ferrer's death was the signal for disturbances in many countries, but not in Spain. London had a great demonstration; in Paris the Socialists massed in force outside the Spanish Embassy, anti-clerical riots took place in Italy, and even in Monte Video disturbances were reported.

The firm measures taken by the authorities in Spain in dealing with the anarchists during "The Bloody Week" of July, and later, in refusing to be intimidated into releasing Ferrer, had a marked effect in the limitation of Socialist activity. Order was gradually restored, and the country enjoyed a tranquillity such as had not existed for many years. Bomb outrages ceased, and although revolutionaries and Socialists still existed, they had learned their lesson from those thrilling episodes of 1909. It may be that any action they may take in future will be more constitutional, and will not react on themselves, as terrorism in any form has always done.

The execution of Ferrer was the supreme and final act of the strong repressive measures taken by the Government of Spain to deal with the anarchist movement in Barcelona. Many of the revolutionaries—no one knows how many—were killed in the fighting, or, like Ferrer, captured and shot at Montjuich. The Socialists and anarchists of Barcelona had never

ceased to demonstrate in their Press, by public meetings and by other methods, that they considered that my appointment was directed solely against them ; indeed, the Royal Order which created the special force, known as " Arrow's Police," expressly stated that it was established " to investigate the terrorist crimes in Barcelona." I was not surprised, therefore, when, soon after tranquillity was restored, I was paid off with liberal compensation for the months that remained unexpired of my three years engagement, and *La Oficina de Investigación Criminal* was closed.

When I left Spain to return to London I had been there for two years and three months continuously. Perhaps I felt that if I visited England it would have made it very difficult for me to return to Spain. During this time I made many friends, Spanish and English, whose friendship I still retain, and I believe that the extremists against whom my energies were directed were only my enemies on principle. I learned too, that the freemasonry that undoubtedly exists in this country amongst policemen was extended to me in Spain, for the Spanish Police always treated me with great courtesy and consideration, although my presence there was a practical demonstration against their efficiency. My sojourn in Spain leaves no regrets, but much to remember and to be thankful for. My crowning satisfaction, however, was a letter I received in December 1909 from the then Prime Minister of Spain, Señor Moret, inviting me to visit him in Madrid. This I did, and had several interviews with this grand gentleman that will always be a pleasant memory.

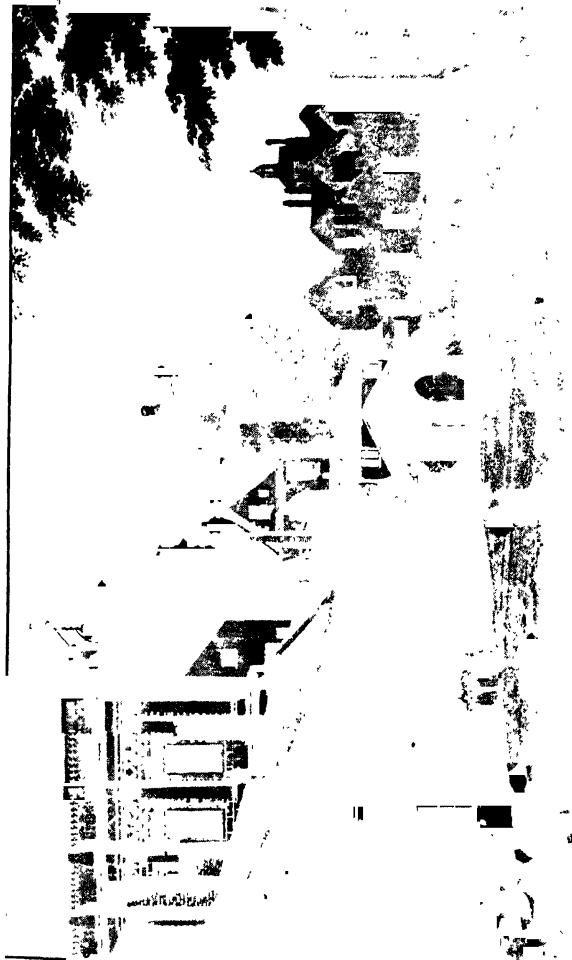
## CHAPTER XXIV

### SCOTLAND YARD

THROUGHOUT the English-speaking world for nearly a century "Scotland Yard" has been synonymous with "police-detective," not only in official parlance, but to the public generally, and no other name has had so much romance woven round it in literature, at the theatre, the music-hall, and the cinema, yet the origin of the name has no connection whatever with the police or detective service.

Old writers described Scotland Yard as a palace, with large pleasure grounds extending to the river, a little to the south of Charing Cross and near Whitehall. The palace was built by our Saxon kings as a residence for the kings of Scotland when they visited London, hence the name. It was in buildings on this site, still called Scotland Yard, that Sir Robert Peel established the headquarters of the Metropolitan Police when the Force was first instituted in 1829. The police offices, extended from time to time, remained there until 1890, when they were removed to the present headquarters on the Embankment, close to Westminster Bridge, and, to preserve the association, were called "New Scotland Yard."

Perhaps the best-known and most active branch of the London Metropolitan Police is that devoted to the detection of crime. The detective is the descendant of the old "Bow-Street Runners" or "Robin Red-breasts," so called because they wore scarlet waistcoats



SCOTLAND YARD WITH PART OF THE "ANQUETING HOUSE."

SCOTLAND YARD, FROM AN OLD PRINT. LOOKING AT THE PICTURE THE POLICE OFFICE WAS ON THE LEFT UNTIL IT WAS REMOVED TO THE PRESENT BUILDING ON THE EMBANKMENT.





as a badge of authority. These disappeared when Sir Robert Peel organised the Force in 1829, and no part of it was especially employed for the detection of crime until fifteen years later, when a dozen detectives were appointed, three inspectors, and nine sergeants ; then six constables were added, and the number was gradually increased to meet demands, until it formed quite a respectable force of chief inspectors, inspectors, sergeants, and constables, with separate offices in "The Yard." This detective department continued its functions, to its credit and the satisfaction of the public, for over thirty years, when what was nothing short of a calamity happened, in that some of its most prominent members were proved to be corrupt and dishonest.

In April 1877 Harry Benson, William Kurr and others were tried at the Central Criminal Court on charges of forgery and obtaining £10,000 by fraud. The offences committed by these men, known as the "Goncourt Turf Frauds," created a great sensation, so cleverly were they conceived and carried out ; and £10,000 was but a small part of the money the conspirators obtained, for their operations lasted some years with the greatest possible success. It was proved that to them fraud was a profession and worse—that they, having command of ample funds, had succeeded in corrupting several of the most important officers in the detective department at The Yard, who had accepted bribes not only to assist the conspirators in their frauds, but to prevent their arrest. Benson was sentenced to fifteen years, and others to ten years' penal servitude.

Soon after their conviction Nemesis overtook these officers, as she always does in such cases, for the convicts gave evidence to the Government clearly showing that the officers referred to had conspired with them, and three chief inspectors and one inspector were arrested, charged, and committed for trial to the Central Criminal Court. The trial lasted twenty-two days and attracted great public attention. All except one were convicted and sentenced to the highest punishment awarded by the law for the offence—two years' imprisonment.

I give these particulars because they lead up to the formation of the Criminal Investigation Department (the C.I.D.) as it exists to-day, for, following on this scandal, and no doubt resulting from it, the Government appointed the late Sir Howard Vincent to reorganise the detective department as the Criminal Investigation Department, with full power to act as Director of Criminal Investigations. Colonel Sir Howard Vincent, K.C.M.G., C.B., had published an English translation of the memoirs of the French spy, Lecocq, which brought him under the notice of the Home Office, and it was in 1878 that Lord Cross selected him as the first Director of Criminal Investigations, a post he occupied with great success for six years. He afterwards became a Member of Parliament, and in 1907, when I was about to leave for Spain, he wrote me a letter of congratulation from the House of Commons, and referred to his appointment of me at The Yard in 1883. He died in 1908, and an obituary notice set out his views on the qualities essential to a good detective officer, and, as I think they apply to-day as much as ever, I quote them from the *Daily Telegraph*:

“ There is probably no class of public servants who have so thankless a task to perform as the detective police. They are habitually expected to accomplish impossibilities ; although afforded by the law the most scanty and inadequate facilities, although working in the dark, with their hands to a great extent tied, there is usually a dissatisfaction if they cannot bring home the offence to its author. . . . The work is attractive in the eyes of novel-readers, and has, beyond question, its interests, but it is also attended with very considerable risk, for, with the most honest intentions in the world, a detective officer may find himself in very serious trouble. It is, therefore, not a matter of surprise that the difficulty of finding good men is very considerable. Without at least two or three years' experience of ordinary police duty they are valueless. To perform the latter a certain physical standard is essential, while it often lessens the qualification for detective work, and yet, with rare exceptions, cannot be departed from, because it often happens that a man has to be sent back from duty in plain clothes to duty in uniform. Considerable knowledge of the world, good education, good address, tact, and temper are also essential to a good detective officer.”

As the C.I.D. had only been in existence for a few years when I was appointed to a very humble position in it, I have known all the more important members of it. I was young and inexperienced then, and no doubt saw things in a perspective that altered after many years of service, for it appeared to me that there were

"giants" at The Yard when I first went there, and this impression remains with me still as a sort of hero-worship.

The first superintendent of the department was Mr. Adolphus Williamson. We called him affectionately "Dolly" Williamson, and I can visualise him now, with his black jacket and vest and silk hat, one hand usually in a jacket-pocket, astute, kindly, and always as gentlemanly in conduct as he was in appearance. He was afterwards promoted to chief constable, I believe the first officer of this rank in the department. John Shore was his senior chief inspector and succeeded him as superintendent—a big man, as strong in character as in appearance, he was of a "John Bright" type, and always wore a black frock-coat suit, with a silk hat, quaker-like and broad of brim.

The next in seniority was, if I remember rightly, Chief Inspector Greenham, a gentleman in every sense, travelled, a linguist, and often in attendance on the Queen or some other royal personage (there was no Special Branch in those days). Then came Chief Inspector Butcher, well-groomed and as fierce of aspect as he was kindly of heart. The Inspectors were all smart men—Andy Lansdowne; Jarvis, so often in America that he seemed as much American as English; John George Littlechild, afterwards the first Chief of the Special Branch; Jack Langrish, a sportsman who looked the part; Roots, grave and learned; Andrews and Chamberlain, both "bearded like the Pard," and almost as cat-like in their activities; Rabinowitz, Von Tornow, and Moser, a dapper, versatile little man—these three were all of foreign

extraction, mysterious in their movements and often engaged on some big Russian rouble note forgery or other foreign business. They are all nothing but a memory now, but it is a privilege to have known them, and the work they did in the department still lives.

In April 1906 a circular letter was sent, by direction of the Home Secretary, to the chief constables of county and borough police forces, acquainting them that, to assist them in the investigation of difficult cases of murder and other serious crimes, it had been arranged for a small number of detectives, of special skill and experience, belonging to the Metropolitan Police, to be available for temporary service. The letter invited application to the Home Office, by telegram or otherwise, for this assistance, and made a point that, especially in cases of murder, application should be made without loss of time and while clues were fresh, and to be accompanied by an assurance of the fullest co-operation and assistance from the chief constable applying and from his officers (see *The Times*, 10th May, 1906).

To provide for this assistance five chief inspectors of the C.I.D. at The Yard, afterwards known as the "Big Five," were selected, as set out in the *Daily Mail*, 10th May, 1906, from which I quote the following:

"Five of the leading Scotland Yard detectives, it is now stated, are to constitute a kind of headquarters staff for the study of great criminal mysteries and the direction, through the Commissioner, of the pursuit of criminals. The names of the five men who are to compose this 'round table' will give

even the cleverest and most hardened law-breakers some cause to fear their collective deliberations.

“Hitherto there have been but three chief detective-inspectors at Scotland Yard ; henceforth, since the promotion of Inspectors Drew and Kane to that rank, there are five. These five form the committee. Each is in the front rank of the world’s detectives ; each is an expert in his own department.

“The five men are : Chief Inspector Fox, whose speciality is in the investigation of tragic mysteries ; Chief Inspector Froest, perhaps the most famous detective in the world ; Chief Inspector Arrow, the terror of forgers ; Chief Inspector Drew, who has caught many clever jewel-thieves ; and Chief Inspector Kane, whose experience has been very wide.”

Thus the C.I.D. grew in number and importance, as a body of specialists selected for the prevention and detection of crime for the whole of the Metropolitan Police District, an area of 699 square miles with a population of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  millions. The Big Five had always been centred at The Yard, but now they are distributed to enable them to keep more closely in touch with crime and the members of the department in the various divisions, and to link up more closely with the Central Office at The Yard. For this purpose the whole metropolitan area is divided into four districts, and one of the Big Five is placed in charge of each, with the rank and pay of superintendent, while the other, the senior, remains at The Yard, with the rank and pay of chief constable. This is the position to-day, and the strength of the Criminal Investigation

Department, of which these five are the working chiefs, is approximately as follows :

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| (1) At the Central Office, Scotland Yard, for the investigation of crime (other than political offences) | 85  |
| (2) All ranks of C.I.D. employed in divisions  | 542 |
| (3) Attached to the Flying Squads . . . .  | 45  |
| (4) Employed at The Yard in the Criminal Record Office and the Finger-Print Office . .                   | 33  |

(I am not including the Special Branch of the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard, which deals with political crimes and the protection of royal and other notable personages.)

Thus we have less than 700 men specially employed for the prevention of crime to cover an area of 699 square miles with a population of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  millions, not one man to every ten thousand inhabitants ; and these include the eighty-five men permanently engaged at Scotland Yard in the active investigation of crime (other than political) and available for temporary service in the provinces.

That the officers of the C.I.D. at the present time have advantages over those of my time is undoubted. The divisional detective-inspector of to-day was then called a " local inspector " ; and when I held this office, twenty-five years ago, I had to write my own reports, keep my correspondence register, warrant register, and other important records. Now the D.D.I. has a clerk, generally a shorthand-typist. I am not exaggerating when I say that my hours of duty, as a local inspector of the " C " Division in the West End averaged fourteen hours a day, Sundays included, and if I was wanted in the night I was sent for, and often



had to walk to the police station. Now the inspector can be in bed, receive reports and give instructions by telephone, and if his presence is required a car is sent for him. I had no assistance from telephones or wireless, could not make use of a motor-car or aeroplane, not even a motor-bicycle and side-car. It is a question, however, if the immense progress made since the time I write of, in telephone and wireless communication and in travel by road and air, has been of so much advantage to the police as to the criminal, and this very question has added greatly to the anxiety and responsibility of the former in strenuous endeavour to get ahead of the criminal in taking advantage of this progress.

I have before me an item which appeared in the *Wandsworth Boro' News*, 12th February, 1926, on the use of the telephone by police, and, as I believe it fairly represents the position, I cannot do better than quote it:

**“ HOW LONDON CAN BE GIRDLED WITH POLICE  
IN FIVE MINUTES**

“ How London can be surrounded by a cordon of police within five minutes of an alarm of crime was explained by a Scotland Yard official.

“ Before a fugitive law-breaker has time to reach the suburbs, he states, a description of him can be circulated to every police station, and in whatever direction he flees officers will be looking for him.

“ Immediately information regarding a ‘ wanted ’ man reaches headquarters his description is simultaneously telegraphed over private wires to all divisional stations. The message is punched out

in code ; at the other end an ingenious mechanism converts it into a printed telegram. If the message is marked 'All Stations,' the officer-in-charge calls up all the sub-stations at the same time by means of a multiple switch, and telephones the information. The whole process can be completed within five minutes, despite the size of London.

"Even the most remote sub-station can broadcast a message in almost as short a time. The police telephone the information immediately to headquarters in Whitehall, which sets in operation the cordon alarm.

"Many criminals have been captured by this method, and if the telephone were used more promptly by civilians the number of undetected criminals would be considerably decreased."

I see no reason why this system should not be extended to the ports and to provincial police forces.

An efficient wireless plant has been installed at The Yard, but, as the transmissions can be picked up by any wireless receiver, a code is used which will in time become universal. What is really wanted is a wireless which can only be picked up by the individual it is intended for ; experts are trying to bring this very necessary control into action, and no doubt this will soon become an accomplished fact.

The motor tenders used by the Flying Squad are equipped with a receiving-set only, the operator being an officer of the C.I.D. Each tender is in charge of an inspector, who has with him officers of lower grade in number according to the service likely to be required

of them. They patrol districts where there is an epidemic of crime, and The Yard can get in touch with them in a few seconds in any part of the Metropolis. At present if the officers on the tender wish to communicate with the Head Office they have to do so by telephone, but it is believed that, at no distant period, these tenders will be furnished with transmitting sets. It will be remembered what an important part wireless had in the arrest of Crippen in mid-ocean, and it is satisfactory to know that The Yard can now communicate direct with any ship fitted with wireless.

So far as I know, aeroplanes have not yet been used by the C.I.D., but, should circumstances make it desirable, this may come at any time. Officers are posted at aerodromes, just as they are at ports, to keep watch for fugitives or for stolen property, and on occasions this has proved very useful.

Motor-cars are now available for senior officers at The Yard and in divisions. The "motor bandit" is much in evidence, and stolen motor-cars have played a very important part in recent crimes, particularly in burglary and shopbreaking. This is partly due to the ease with which a car may be stolen and used to pick up confederates, convey them, with tools and weapons, to the scene of the crime, and then to drive rapidly with the loot to a place of safety, after which the car is generally abandoned.

There is a very practical training school for detectives at The Yard, presided over by a chief inspector. The curriculum covers some four weeks and is very stiff. Pupils are taught to pick up individuals from description

and, on the principle that "He who knows how to direct his view sees much in a little while," to give an accurate description of a person of whom they have had only a passing glimpse. They learn the use of fingerprints, how to take impressions of them and of footprints, how to describe articles of jewellery and how to give evidence. They are given object lessons in the Black Museum on the implements used in burglary, forgery, coining, etc. They have to write essays on intricate police subjects and are expected to quote authorities and Acts of Parliament. At the end of the course they are examined by a board of superior officers, and, if they pass satisfactorily, get a certificate of merit. Officers from County and Borough Police Forces are invited to attend these classes, and there is keen competition for selection, for when they get certificates the fact is published in the *Police Gazette*.

It was recently reported in *The Times* and other papers that an eminent judge, in his charge to a grand jury, stated that "recently published figures by the Home Office revealed that the number of undiscovered indictable offenders throughout the country were larger to-day than they had been for sixty years," and that the learned judge went on to say, "it may be that the criminal of to-day is more efficient than in former times or that the police throughout the country are now giving a larger measure of attention to minor matters, such as traffic licences, breaches of by-laws and the like."

It is clear that experts in crime are more efficient to-day than in former times, in that they use the advantages modern progress has placed at their disposal,

but the police are, strenuously and systematically, adapting their methods to this progress, and, if they have not got a lead of the criminal, at least honours are easy. As "attention to minor matters, such as traffic licences, breaches of by-laws and the like" forms no part of the duties of the C.I.D., there must be, so far as this department is concerned, some other reason for this increase of crime.

There are men to-day who become criminals through force of circumstances over which they have no control. Their lapse is not due to inclination or environment, and up to a certain point they resist temptation. They are men of previous good character, perhaps with a distinguished record in the War; they have, therefore, no records or associations to bring them under the notice of the C.I.D., and, if they are arrested it is generally due to the vigilance of the constable on the beat. The War accustomed them to deal desperately with desperate situations, reckless of danger and even of life. They are an aftermath of the War.

Such men may have been demobilised in full possession of their physical powers, and encouraged on all sides to hope for a prosperous future at the hands of a grateful country. They find that the period of the War has unfitted them for most occupations, and that they are unable to get employment. They see people who never did any fighting flaunting riches gained while they were in the trenches. The years go by, their hopes are not fulfilled, they become desperate and embittered against society, and, throwing discretion to the winds, decide to take into their own hands

the problem of the distribution of wealth. Sad as it is there is no doubt that such men are accountable for many of the crimes that have, during the past two or three years, startled the public and baffled the C.I.D.—the “cat” burglaries and the raids by motor bandits on jewellers’ shops, post offices, and banks.

Old “lags” are laughing up their sleeves at the result of the “Shepherd” police enquiry, for they know that this so-called reform will operate in their favour against the police, and therefore to the detriment of the public. Formerly, when an arrest was made, finger-prints were taken as a matter of course. I never knew a prisoner to object; criminals realised that it was useless to do so, while it was clear to innocent persons that, by means of a finger-print search, it could be demonstrated to the police, and to the magistrate at the first appearance at court, that there was no conviction recorded, and so influence the granting of bail in their favour. Now that criminals have the option of declining to have their finger-prints taken on arrest they naturally do so, and, as they make a point of having an address that can be verified, but from which they can remove at short notice, they are granted bail soon after arrest and nothing more is seen of them until they are re-arrested on the same charge, or what is more likely, upon a fresh charge.

Only the other week in North London a man was arrested as a suspected person loitering with intent to commit a felony, no doubt housebreaking. He naturally declined to have his finger-prints taken, and next day he was remanded for a week on bail. He continued his usual criminal occupation during this

week, for he was again arrested in another part of the Metropolis, this time for housebreaking. He was caught in the act, and it may be that this was not the only house he had broken into during this week. He was a habitual criminal, and subject to the provisions of the 7th Section of the Prevention of Crimes Act under which the magistrate had power to sentence him to twelve months' imprisonment for the offence upon which he was originally arrested, and of course the prisoner knew this.

During the past year or two the public has been concerned to see so many well-known officers resign from the C.I.D., with the rank of inspector, as soon as they became entitled to a pension. These inspectors must have selected their employment, in early manhood, as a career for life, and surely cannot be considered to have finished this career before they are 50 years of age. There has been a discussion in the Press recently as to the age men should retire from business: well-known authorities expressed the opinion that, in normal conditions, men are at their best in business when they are sixty or even older, but one authority suggested that instead of men retiring at sixty they should retire until they become sixty and then, having learned wisdom—start business. Is it on this principle that these valuable and experienced officers resign—because they have learned wisdom? If so, and a remedy can be found so that their services may be retained, then, as the late Superintendent Shore would have expressed it, "Enough said."











